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# Buddhism and Violence

## Militarism and Buddhism in Modern Asia

Edited by
Vladimir Tikhonov and Torkel Brekke

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**Edited by Vladimir Tikhonov and Torkel Brekke**

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# Preface

This book is the result of a workshop about Buddhism, nationalism, and militarism organized by the editors at the University of Oslo in September 2009. There is a thriving community of scholars working on aspects of East Asian and South Asian culture, not least Buddhism, at the Department of Cultural Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS) at the University of Oslo, where both the editors work.

We have for a long time been interested in ideas and practices concerning war and organized violence found in the Asian religious traditions. Tikhonov works on Korea and Brekke works on South Asia, and we thought that the combination of our regional interests would be a nice point of departure for a project that looked at Buddhism and militarism in several Asian societies. One of the puzzling assumptions often encountered when one discusses the possible links or interactions between religion and violence is the idea that Buddhism is a particularly peaceful tradition. Many people see Buddhism as a contrast to the more politically active, indeed the more violent, religions like Christianity or Islam. We believe that it is meaningless to assume that one world religion is by nature more or less violent than any other. As the chapters in this book shows, Buddhism has had a variety of roles in relation to nationalism, militarism, war, and insurgencies across Asia in modern times. The question of whether or not Buddhism is "really" pacifist or violent cannot be answered in any meaningful sense, in our opinion. However, we would love to see more research about the details of how Buddhist organizations and Buddhist individuals engage in actual situations of armed conflict and how Buddhist narrative and doctrine are used, or not used, in order to defend or reject the use of violence.

Several institutions and individuals have helped us in our work with this book. Our greatest thanks go to the contributors themselves. They have all proved to be incredibly patient and understanding whenever we have turned to them for changes or revisions. We have enjoyed working with them. We would also like to thank the research network PluRel (Religion in Pluralist Society) at the University of Oslo for funding the workshop in 2009, and we would like to thank the staff at Routledge for their professional and patient guidance in the preparation of the manuscript.

# Introduction

## Dialectics of Violence and Non-Violence—Buddhism and Other Religions

*Vladimir Tikhonov*

It may be possible to argue that the two most significant inventions that emerged in the course of humanity's modern development are the inventions of the equalitarian ideal on the socio-political plane and peace as a norm in inter-state relations. It is not, of course, that the dream of equality was completely foreign to the pre-modern world. It was not, but the attachment to a metaphysic equality of all souls, or all minds, usually went parallel with recognition of inevitability and justifiability of all sorts of socio-political inequalities. Males and females might be "one in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3:28), and "all are baptized by one Spirit into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12), but on a more mundane level, slaves were to obey their masters (Ephesians 6:5) and wives were to submit to their husbands (Colossians 3:18). Even those teachings of the "Axial Age" (K. Jaspers) that were much less "mainstream" than the others, definitely were not envisioning the world devoid of master-subject relations: Taoists' great classic, *Dao De Jing* (fourth–third centuries B.C.), which epitomizes ancient China's "counter-tradition" long involved in polemics against more orthodox schools of statecraft, still addresses "sage rulers" and "superior men" (rulers and statesmen), advising him on governing the state through "non-action." In fact, even in Thomas More's (1478–1535) epoch-making 1516 *Utopia* slaves obeyed their masters, wives obeyed their husbands, and administrators were given the best food: republican dream as it was, it did not necessarily conform to today's standards of equalitarianism.

Just as the existence of the rulers and masters—for the most part dynastic and hereditary—was commonplace, it was mostly taken as self-evident that warfare was a default mode of settling irreconcilable differences between them. *Dao De Jing*, a paean to "natural" life of smaller communities blissfully free from over-administration and "unneeded sophistication" of all kinds, made it clear that arms are the instruments of "evil omen" and not the instruments of the "superior men." Still, even the Taoist text—often celebrated as a pre-modern sprout of pacifism—concedes that the "superior men" use the weapons "on compulsion of necessity" (Chapter 31). Ability to do so, once need arises, was very much the core part of the standard definition of "ruler" in most pre-modern class

societies we know. Chinese *Classic of Ritual* (*Liji*), placed war, for example, into the list of the usual business the ruler was expected to conduct in the course of a typical year (Chapter *Yueling*). He was advised to go for war in early autumn, but not in early spring—otherwise, war-making was just a part of kingship's routine. The idea that the world might indeed function somehow differently, all members of a given political community being recognized as essentially equal by birth and war being recognized as a deviation rather than rule in the relations between various political communities, is a fruit of sixteenth–eighteenth centuries' developments, namely of pioneering anti-monarchical revolutions in Western Europe, rise of social contract-based theories of statecraft and Enlightenment thought. The two great inventions, that of socio-political equality and peace, were closely related to one another. It was by no means accidental that Kant's seminal *Perpetual Peace* (1795) envisioned a peaceful coexistence among republican (and not monarchical) states, eventually forming a worldwide "federation of peace."

Short of such a international federation, war was in the normal order of the things, as Kant himself admitted. And religion not only sanctioned the violence-based order of things. In many cases, it also sacralized it, and made militaristic violence and organic part of its discourses (mythoi, sacred books, etc.) and performances (rituals, ceremonies, etc.). In the religions of the early class societies, violence was a necessary part of their logic of functioning. Typically, the Greek gods demanded human and cattle sacrifices, provoked wars, sired the war heroes, and sometimes even participated in wars themselves. Athena, the goddess of battle, was pictured in *The Iliad* as fighting together with the Achaeans in some moments: "She levered Sthenelus out of his car. A twist of her wrist and the man hit the ground" (*Iliad* 191). In some cases, gods even became casualties of wars—Ares, the war god, was supposed to have been wounded by Diomedes, assisted by Athena, in the course of the Trojan War (*Iliad* 855). The Greek Ares, Roman Mars, or Celtic Taranis had warfare as one of their major functions; but at the same time, in many Indo-European pantheons, the chief heavenly gods, often associated with thunder, storms, and rains (Greek Zeus, Roman Jupiter, Vedic Indra, Nordic Thor, Slavic Perun, etc.) were understood as also representing war and warriors.[1] It is not, however, that archaic Indo-Europeans were in any way unique in their sacralization of the images of heroic violence. In fact, practically all the known pantheons around the world include a divinity with "god/goddess of battle"-like functions.[2] Even the Native American Hopi religion, widely known as supposedly pacifist, includes the tradition on the war gods and death sentences for breaking divinely prescribed taboos.[3] While the recent speculations on religion as the *cause* of violence do not seem to hold water,[4] it still seems to be undeniable that from the very beginning, most religions of archaic class societies embraced and integrated into their visions of the sacred space the mundane world as it was known to them—the world in which perpetual strife for

resources and dominant positions between tribes, chiefdoms, and fledgling states was a norm of life.

Why were the ardor and rage of the battle, "heroic" slaughter, suffering of the wounded, and the frenzied joy of the winners amidst rape and pillage so easy to integrate into the structures of sacred space, into the religious canons and mythoi? Traditional Marxist explanation of the violent features of archaic religions was that they "reflected" the violent realities of the process through which the oldest class societies were formed.[5] This logic suggests that the real-life images of warlike aristocracy were projected onto the mythological pantheons. Newer, twentieth-century explanations include neo-evolutionary ones, represented by Rene Girard's "scapegoating" theory. This theory, evidently built upon the Hobbesian vision of the "original" state of the world as *bellum omnium contra omnes*, assumes that the conflicts of mutually imitating ("mimetic") possessive desires in the situation of limited resources make eventually violence inescapable. However, the level of tension inside an in-group may be controlled and internal violence may be prevented through "scapegoating" one of group members or somebody from outside (be it a human or an animal) and symbolically resolving the tensions in the act of solemnly killing or evicting the "scapegoat." Girard views this process as the origin of the sacrificial rituals known to practically all archaic (and not only archaic) religions.[6] In this way, the early religion built upon the sacrificial rituals is being understood by Girard as an effective societal mechanism of in-group violence control. This understanding should not contradict the essence of Marxist tradition which views religions as ideologies assisting the dominant groups in their control over societies. A similar approach—which we can term "conflict control-centered understanding of the sacralization of violence by religions"—was developed by Walter Burkert, a scholar of ancient Greek religion. In his vision, the sacrificial violence developed from the hunting cultures and hunting cults, with their emphasis on the solemnized destruction of the prey, and eventually became an important mechanism for affirming life and in-group cohesion.[7] While much of speculative reasoning on the essentiality of violence for the human species behind the theses of Girard and Burkert might appear controversial, their works seem to be instrumental in shaping the prevailing consensus on the role of religion in early class societies. It is undeniable that archaic religions, with their function of control over "divine violence" (communal sacrificial rituals, etc.) could help both to minimize the violence inside the community and thus to buttress the societal control capabilities of the nascent ruling class.[8]

While early religions tended to imagine both human and divine universes as involved in permanent strife, the earliest known systems of political philosophy hardly were more violence-averse. In most systems of early political thought, state-directed organized violence appeared as a necessary part of the general scheme of things. Normally, early political philosophies warned against "excessive," "unmanageable," or "undue" violence, while

considering "manageable" and "justifiable" warfare or "just" punishment in a violent form (death sentences, etc.) a necessary part of social life. In some cases, those two functions of societal power were conflated, "just" war being seen as a continuation of criminal justice. A thinker whom many regard as one of the founding fathers of "just war" theory in the Western tradition, Plato (427–347 B.C.), recorded in his dialogue, *Alcibiades,* Socrates' exhortations to wage the war only in the case it appears "just." Unless the war is waged against those practicing injustice it is neither wise nor noble (I, 107–109)—but otherwise, it is just a part of *realpolitik* in the world of quarreling Greek city states and their "barbarian" neighbors. Plato was clear about war being a necessity rather than a virtue, and wanted the legislative activities to be focused on peace rather than war (*Laws,* I, 628)—but never doubted that warfare was a useful societal function and an expedient political device.[9]

Contemporaneous Indian philosophizing on statecraft was hardly any more pacifist. *Arthashastra* (assumedly composed around fourth–third centuries B.C.) treats war as a "normal" *modus operandi* of inter-state system. The kings, mighty "wielders of rod of punishment," tend to be surrounded by enemies within and outside, and have to mete out punishments and go to war for the sake of survival and prosperity of their kingdoms. However, the book warns against meaningless bravery: If you are weak, better surrender and seek protection of the strong. It basically advices on making war "manageable."[10] While ancient Indian statecraft tradition saw punishment of deviants and destruction of external enemies as two crucial functions of kingship, early Chinese political philosophy, especially Confucian, tended to see the licit war as "continuation of criminal justice through other, namely military, means," to paraphrase the famous definition of war by Clausewitz (1780–1831). Such authoritative works compiled in third–second centuries B.C. as a Confucian philosophical treatise, *Xunzi*, and more eclectic encyclopedia of statecraft, *Lushi Chunqui*, defined "righteous warfare" (*yibing*) as "punitive expeditions," the *ultima ratio* of the sage-kings attempting to order and civilize the world.[11] This *ultima ratio* was, of course, in principle to be used only when all the other methods of restoring order were exhausted—but it still was a part and parcel of statecraft's routines. In a word, early philosophies were attempting to distinguish between illicit and licit violence and devise better methods for managing the latter; but they tended not to question the legitimacy of violence as such.

This ultimate step of doubting the legitimacy of manslaughter in principle was attempted by some universalist religious-philosophic systems which emerged in seventh–fourth centuries B.C. in the Mediterranean and India—Jainism being among the pioneers. Early Christianity, which was perhaps the first ever religion in the world history to initially legitimize the refusal by its adepts to serve in the military and fight in wars, had its pacifism strengthened by its initially oppositional socio-political status. It was, after all, a persecuted confession until the early fourth century—and

its ideologues understandably saw little reason for themselves to fight for Roman Empire in which they were living marginalized lives. An important early Church father, Tertullian (160–220), made the argument against serving the Empire on the battlefield very clear:

> There is no agreement between the divine and the human sacrament, the standard of Christ and the standard of the devil, the camp of light and the camp of darkness. One soul cannot be due to two masters, God and Caesar. And yet Moses carried a rod, and Aaron wore a buckle, and John (Baptist) is girt with leather and Joshua the son of Nun leads a line of march; and the People warred: if it pleases you to sport with the subject. But how will a Christian man war, nay, how will he serve even in peace, without a sword, which the Lord has taken away? For albeit soldiers had come unto John, and had received the formula of their rule; albeit, likewise, a centurion had believed; still the Lord afterward, in disarming Peter, unbelted every soldier." (*On Idolatry*, XIX)[12]

In the Empire whose intellectuals tended to view Christianity as "impious" and socially disruptive superstition,[13] Christians saw themselves as "detached from this world," "not of this world"—and this "otherness" empowers their pacifist stand, otherwise unjustifiable in an empire built upon conquest, with an economic system predicated on the non-economic exploitation (rent extraction by the state and private actors). It is important to notice, however, that early Christian pacifism—the rejection of the imperial warfare by a marginalized minority—did not amount to full renunciation of militaristic violence as such in *this* world. Not unlike Plato, or early Indian and Chinese theoreticians of statecraft, early Christians accepted that the world is violent by definition. They just did not want to participate in the militaristic violence themselves—at least, as long as the Empire did not want to even recognize them as worthwhile citizens. Still, even some of the earliest Church fathers, while remaining skeptical of the Christian service on the battlefield, were positive towards the idea that Christians could contribute in a different way to the maintenance of the mundane order, even by the "pagan" rulers. Origen (185–254), for example, wanted Christians to contribute to the imperial warfare by non-violent means, including prayer (*Against Celsus*, VIII–73).[14] In the end, the early Christian pacifist stance remained quite moderate since they could not (and would not) fully reject the source of the militaristic violence, namely the state. "Reddite quae sunt Caesaris Caesari et quae sunt Dei Deo" ("Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," Matthew, 22:21), in the end, could be logically interpreted as an invitation to render the state the military service it demanded—as long as the state authorities were seen as properly constituted, and demand for battlefield service as one more reasonable form for taxation.

Another important caveat in the narrative on the supposed pacifism of early Christians is the question of violence intrinsic in the ways how Christian religion was believed in and performed by its earliest adepts. That Jesus Christ has reportedly delivered the gospel of "turn the other cheek" benevolence, is undeniable; but it is equally undeniable that early Christianity as a worldview cannot be reduced to universalist benevolence only. Jesus' status as "son of God" was to be buttressed not only by moralist exhortations, but also miracle-making employing supernatural forces and meant to overawe the witnesses by the spectacle of the deity in bodily form, "the head over all power and authority" (Col. 2:9,10). While in reality early Christians of the first three centuries were just a disenfranchised sect of Jewish origins dispersed through the swathes of Roman Empire, in its own apocalyptic vision of the world it constituted the "select few" chosen by almighty incarnated deity from among the sinful, doomed multitudes.[15] In fact, one of the factors which aggravated the marginalization that early Christians had to suffer, was the relative exclusiveness, unusually (for contemporaneous Mediterranean culture) closed character of the Christian communities—"third nation," "nation apart," "Christ's body" detached from all the "outsiders" as they often characterized themselves (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:17).

While early Christians hardly were in any position to actively fight what they perceived as the evil world outside of their blessed community ("the whole world is under the control of the evil one:" 1 John 5:19), they were fully prepared to fight it, and also on the physical plane, once conditions were ripe for this. After all, as St. Augustine (354–430) wrote after Christianity found itself in the position of authority inside the imperial order, in a letter to "heretical" Donatist bishop Petilianus (405), physical coercion, while not conducive to faith and goodness, could at least "prevent the evil-doers from doing evil."[16] In this context, St. Augustine's views on the inevitability of "just war" in certain situations—which contradicted more pronounced negative position on warfare in the early Church typified by Tertullian—made perfect sense: was it possible to fully eschew arms in the world where evil was so profoundly endemic?[17] One may argue that the proto-Hobbesian vision of the world exemplified by *Arthashastra*, and the skepticism towards the profane world, contaminated by the original sin, that permeated early Christian literature, have the mutually different starting points, Christianity being distinctively different from the cynical visions of mankind doomed to eternal scrambles over power and resources. In any case, the eventual conclusions were more or less similar, fighting being accepted as a fact of life.

The early Buddhist stance on fighting and violence—which several articles in this collection refer to—in many ways, comes amazingly close to the early Christian stance. On one hand, violence is seen as an endemic evil of the profane world bound by ignorance of truth, attachments, and cravings. Famous *Aganna Sutra* (*Digha Nikaya*, XXVII), the early Buddhist

narrative on the origins of the world and human society, described the origins of kingship as a "social contract" of sorts necessitated by the violence of the chaotic primitive society permeated by egoism and greed: as people grew tired of punishing themselves the thieves who stole their neighbors' crops, they started to select and appoint the rulers, whose duty was to prevent the society from sliding back into disorder.[18] On the other hand, the early adepts of Buddha's Law, very much like their Christian counterparts, prided themselves on being different from the fallen world. It was recognized that violence, however endemic in the world it might be, had to be avoided by the monks and enthusiastic lay practitioners:

> All
> tremble at the rod,
>   all
> are fearful of death.
> Drawing the parallel to
>   yourself,
> neither kill nor get others to kill. (*Dhammapada*, 129)

The reason why the faithful were to eschew violence, in action, thought, and word, was that violence leads to insalubrious karmic consequences ("bad rebirth"). This point was elaborated in well-known canonical text, *Yodhajivasutra* (*Samyutta Nikaya*, XLII.3), in which Buddha, in a talk with a member of warriors' lineage group, explains to him that the slain warriors are to be reincarnated in hell or animals' womb, rather than in company of heavenly *devas* (deities). However, while preaching the unwholesomeness of violence to lay folks and prohibiting any intentional violence against human or animal life to his monastic followers (*Vinaya* IV, 33, 35, 49, 125), the historical Buddha, realistically enough, never tried preaching non-violence to the kings. It is well-known that he tried hard to dissuade one of Buddhist community's important royal sponsors, notorious conqueror King Ajatashatru (r. 491–461) of Magadha, from his aggression against Vriji (Vajji) confederation, an association of oligarchic republics whose "harmonious and pious life" Buddha greatly admired.[19] Ajatashatru's incessant military adventures, however, did not disqualify him as a kingly sponsor of the Buddhist community, since war was understood as a part of king's *dharma*. It had to be avoided if possible—and in this sense it is clear that Buddha was disapproving of Magadhan predator's *modus operandi*—but Buddha never tried to preach full and complete pacifism to the kings. By prohibiting former soldiers (including deserters) to become Buddhist monks (*Vinaya*, I, 73), and by prohibiting Buddhist monks to preach to armed soldiers and overnight in the military camps,[20] Buddha effectively detached his community from the ubiquitous state violence—without ever trying to effectively contain it in practical terms. Even while being separated from Buddhist monastic life, violence remained an organic, inescapable part of the larger scheme of things as viewed by early Buddhists.

In yet another parallel to early Christians, non-participation in worldly violence did not necessarily mean that the *ethos* of militant violence was completely unknown to the early Buddhist community. For sure, the monks were not expected to fight with the others—but much of the Buddhist ascetic life, not unlike early Christian monasticism, was a strenuous fight against oneself. “The one who conquers himself, he is the greatest of conquerors” (*Dhammapada*, 103)—and monks, freeing themselves from attachments, especially on the earlier stages of their training, were often metaphorically compared to soldiers or battle elephants destroying their enemies.[21] Ascetic *ethos* of early Buddhism was unmistakably marked by strong, almost machoist, belief in masculine superiority. Women and their sexuality were regarded as one of the worst dangers in ascetics' life.[22] Against this backdrop, the frequent use of the “militaristic” metaphors by Buddha does not, in fact, look unnatural. Skilled in self-control, self-discipline, and concentration, free from sexual cravings and attachments, the “warriors of Buddha's Law” were expected to obtain an array of supernormal powers:

> Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one. He appears. He vanishes. He goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains as if through space. He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water. He walks on water without sinking as if it were dry land. Sitting cross-legged he flies through the air like a winged bird. With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful. He exercises influence with his body even as far as the Brahma worlds. (*Pansadhovaka Sutta*: *Anguttara Nikaya*, III, 1000)

Miracle-making was certainly not the ultimate aim of the Buddhist ascetic practice—nor were indeed Jesus' miracles an objective in themselves. In both cases, visualized spiritual power was to authenticate the quality of Buddhist, or Christian religious experience in the societies where religion was generally viewed in terms of personal or collective empowerment through the contact with supernatural forces. An ascetic who viewed his presumed “miraculous strength” as “collateral gain” of sorts rather than the aim of his arduous “battle against oneself,” certainly differed, in the form and quality of his engagement with violence, from the heroic personalities of more archaic religions, in which Athena and Ares were fighting mortals in earthly battles and Yahweh was directing Moses to destroy whole tribes of Canaan who “displeased” him with their religious “abominations” (Joshua 6:17–21). However, what did not change was the fact that religion had to relate itself to the world it viewed as inherently violent, and had to position itself as a force of its own kind, rejection of violence often serving as one of the mechanisms of internal cohesion religion as socio-political force desperately needed. Refusal to kill was, in socio-cultural terms, to empower the Buddhist monastic community with clear sense of its separate and distinctive identity. And it was not

expected, of course, that the rest of the world, outside of the boundaries of monkhood, would ever follow suit.

While in the beginning the Buddhist monastic community tended, at least, to indicate sometimes to the outside world that its violent ways were not salubrious even on its own level, its attitudes changed with time. Just as Christians after Emperor Constantine (r. 306–337), Buddhists, further empowered in mundane terms by conversion of great Emperor—and ruthless conqueror—Ashoka (304–232 B.C.), began to accept a variety of "just war" theories, and further distinguish between "permissible" and "impermissible" kinds of violence. While St. Augustine envisioned the "wars for the sake of the peace," or "war as a lesser evil in order to prevent a greater evil,"[23] post-Ashoka Mahāyānic ("Greater Vehicle") tradition of Buddhism developed its own brand of "compassionate killing" theory. This concept—which, in somewhat ahistorical vein, may be called Orwellian—was developed in *Yogacharabhumi-sastra* (*Discourse on the Stages of Yogic Practice*, c. fourth century), an authoritative canonical scripture of the Yogachara School:

> If a bodhisattva meets an evil person who is going to kill many people or to commit a crime liable of the immediate damnation (*anantarya*), he will think in himself: If killing this bandit, I fall in hell, what does it matter? I must not let him go to hell! Then the bodhisattva will examine the situation a good thought or a thought of neutral value in moral terms, and will kill him, full of both the horror of the crime and of the compassion for that person. In doing so, he will not commit any transgression; rather, he will acquire much blessing. (see the Chinese translation in: *Taisho Tripitaka*, XXX 1579 xli 517b15–17)[24]

"Compassionate killing," of course, is easily distinguishable from the heroic slaughters typical for the canonical writings of more archaic religions. It does not romanticise the very act of exercising ultimate power over life and death of another living being. However, just like "just war" speculations in post-Augustinian Christian theology, it provides important justifications for the act of killing. Exactly those justifications form the fundament for more modern acquiescence to violence in Buddhism, which constitutes the main topic of the present collection. An important difference with Christian speculations on "just war" which Buddhism manifests is, however, much less interest in codifying the concrete rules of "acceptable warfare." This part tends to be entrusted to the worldly rulers, in the best spirit of the Buddhist separation between sacred (monastic) and profane realms.

From the times of Kant, the quest for "perpetual peace" (*ewigen Frieden*) became an important keyword in the modern intellectual and spiritual life—not unlike another powerful quest, that for equality and social justice. Much of Western interest towards Buddhism, indeed, seems to be derived from a common (mis)perception—dating back to nineteenth-century introduction of Buddhism to Europe by modernist intellectuals searching for a

"rational," "philosophical" religion compatible with the best traditions of Enlightenment—that Buddhism is somewhat more "peaceful" than the rest of the local and global religions. This belief in the inherent "peacefulness" was further activated during the struggle against the Vietnam War, when some of America's most influential contemporary anti-systemic intellectuals, typically famed poet Gary Snyder, appropriated Buddhism to build an anti-war discourse which would also simultaneously renounce consumerism and other evils of a highly developed capitalist society. That Buddhism is a religion of non-violence, was an axiom for Snyder and his generation of the opponents of American militarism and capitalist alienation.[25] However, as this collection will hopefully show with all the possible clarity, it is simply not the case: Buddhism possesses its own logic of "permissible violence" fully comparable with that of Christian "just war" theories, which still seem, by the way, to define the views of most mainstream churches on the matters of war and peace. The broader and deeper question we perhaps need to pose is: whether religion as such, as a global phenomenon of human culture, should be expected to conform to the pacifist expectations of post-Kantian modern intellectuals.

While Kant seemed to optimistically believe that the world might be pacified through the agency of human reason and collective republican wisdom—why should a majority want violence, with all its primitive unreasonableness?—the worldview typical to most known religions is much more pessimistic. In contrast to the aspirations of the Age of Reason, most religions, Buddhism being no exception, tend to view world and humans as inherently violent; in contrast to the modernist emphasis on reason, religion tends to prioritise power which it claims to obtain through a prescribed "sacred" regimen of life, or contact with supernatural forces. While pacifism, in continuation of the Enlightenment optimism, strives to build a peaceful world, most religions seem to be content with their ubiquitous collaboration with states in the matter of controlling violence rather than eradicating it. "Licit" violence on the battlefield is being condoned and, indeed, encouraged by chaplains, Christian or Buddhist, while "illicit" violence inside one's own society is subject to both religious condemnation and criminal punishment. In fact, religion is one of the oldest ideological apparatuses for controlling violence—and should it be expected to ever reject it *in toto*? While Buddhist doctrine on the negative karmic effects of violence may be appropriated as a good source of pacifist inspirations, the present collection may represent one more argument in favour of treating all religions, Buddhism included, realistically—as time-honoured and immensely rich, but not necessarily the most future-oriented ideological forms known to the humanity.

## NOTES

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# Part I

# Nationalism and Militarism in Modern Asian Buddhisms

# 1 Sinhala Ethno-nationalisms and Militarization in Sri Lanka

*Mahinda Deegalle*

Rapid militarization of post-independent Sri Lanka is shocking and alarming for any Buddhist or non-Buddhist since such a violent phenomenon was unimaginable a few decades earlier in an island called 'paradise.' Most natives and overseas visitors never anticipated that such a naturally beautiful and peaceful society within a relatively short period of time—three decades—would turn into one of the most violent and militarized societies on the planet. Today allegations of human rights violations and war crimes are echoing in every corner[1] as an apt testimony to inevitable consequences of rapid militarization. The tolerant and peaceful image created by the very presence of Theravāda Buddhism in the island over two millennia had created a comfortable zone of safe society relatively free from violence and abuse. This peaceful image began to shatter from the beginning of the latter part of the nineteenth century when seeds and symptoms of an emerging religious and ethnic unrest gradually manifested themselves in a variety of religious and ethnic contexts. Unexpected events such as the Kotahena Religious Riot of 1883[2] in the late nineteenth century and the Sinhala Muslim riot of 1915 and the black July of 1983 in the twentieth century displayed some unpleasant testimonies of disharmony questioning the very idea of ethnic and religious co-existence of a pluralist society that Sri Lanka increasingly became in modern times. The Sinhala youth rebellion against the Sri Lankan government in the southern regions in 1971 and the militant terrorist movement of the LTTE [f. 1975, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] that emerged ferociously in the northern regions in the late 1970s indicated the process of rapid militarization as an inevitable and emerging violent phenomenon. The Tamil militant insurgency of the LTTE, which traumatized the island for nearly three decades consuming many valuable human lives and scarce resources, was forcefully and perhaps for ever militarily defeated in a crucial campaign that ended in May 2009. As a South Asian democracy still struggling to rehabilitate war victims, Sri Lanka yet faces a critical issue of establishing peace and security for the development of post-war society having confronted the serious question of rapid militarization of the civil society.

In order to contribute towards an understanding of the process of militarization of a predominantly Buddhist society, this chapter examines a few episodes relating to the Sinhala and Tamil ethno-nationalisms of the last four decades. It examines ways in which some Buddhists individually as well as collectively being affiliated with political organizations and parties supported and contributed to the rapid militarization of the Sri Lankan state. These developments are examined in the context of the State's mission of eliminating terrorist threats that Sri Lanka faced nearly three decades under the terrorist campaigns of the LTTE.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, modern Sri Lanka primarily as a Buddhist nation that comprises of 70 percent of the total population witnessed a radical growth of Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms combined with increasing militancy and use of violence in resolving social and political problems of the time. Initially, in the distant past, both forms of nationalism, sometimes united and occasionally independently, were in operation as reactions to the British colonial government that began in 1815 but after the independence in 1948 they shifted their focus to each other as mutual enemies working constantly and systematically to exclude and deny the other.

This examination of ethno-nationalisms demonstrates how growing nationalist sentiments against each other in exclusive terms led to gradual militarization that devastated both ethnic and religious communities. As illustrated here some Sinhala nationalist responses can be associated with certain Buddhist groups because they have their bases in the majority Buddhist community. There is no doubt that both Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms have increasingly and equally led to gradual militarization and brutalization of contemporary Sri Lanka. Because of a variety of practical limitations, however, this chapter focuses only on the Sinhala majority side of the issue and Sinhala nationalist contributions towards rapid militarization of Sri Lanka.

## BUDDHIST NATIONALISM AND RELIGIOUS AGENCIES IN ETHNO-POLITICS: JHU FACTOR

Some religious leaders have been important agencies in ethno-nationalism of Sri Lanka. Identifying the lack of research in this area, Brekke notes:

> [W]e need an approach to religion that puts less emphasis both on religious doctrine and on religion as an aspect of ethnic identity. We need to carry out research that puts more emphasis on religious organizations, religious structures of authority and the role of religious organizations and religious leaders in political processes. In particular, we need to study the way that Sri Lankan religious leaders and organizations work in times of conflict, how they have reacted to peace initiatives, whether and how their reactions have influenced their respective constituencies,

> and how the work of these organizations has implications for political processes in the country.[3]

Political events after 2000 marked significant developments in the influence of religious agencies in political affairs of Sri Lanka.[4] The birth of the Jāthika Hela Urumaya (f. 2004, National Sinhala Heritage), Buddhist monk political party, marks an important phase in this development. However, this is not the first occurrence of the influence of Buddhist political leadership and religious agency.

Jayadeva Uyangoda, one of the ardent critics of the Jāthika Hela Urumaya (JHU), commented extensively on the relative success of this monks'-led political party in the 2004 general election in the *South Asia Journal*:

> The nine Buddhist monks of the JHU have added a theocratic dimension to Sri Lanka's parliamentary politics. The JHU is a peculiar political formation in the sense that it is led by politicians while its parliamentary candidates are all Buddhist monks. It indeed benefited from Sri Lanka's system of proportional representation that . . . favours small parties. Under the PR [Proportional Representation] system, any party that obtains a minimum of 5 per cent of votes in a given electoral district qualifies for seats at the expense of major parties. The JHU, committed to aggressive Sinhalese nationalism, fielded 260 candidates who were all Buddhist monks. The JHU monks, campaigning with the promise of establishing a Dharma Rajyaya (a Buddhist Religious State)[5] in Sri Lanka, drew their support mainly from the urban middle-class voters, disenchanted with the mainstream Sinhalese political parties who they see as making compromises with ethnic and religious minorities, especially the Tamils. The voting pattern also indicates that the many middle class UNP [f. 1947, United National Party] voters, who were opposed to the UNP's peace bid with the LTTE, have also shifted their loyalties to the JHU which presented to the electorate a militant version of Sinhalese nationalism, interspersed with the sentiments of majoritarian insecurity among the Sinhalese and a message for moral regeneration.[6]

Foreign media has heavily criticized both political and religious positions of some of the prominent nationalist Buddhist monks. When the Sri Lankan government was waging war in the north of the island, the media questioned and challenged religious and political positions of some Buddhist monks such as Ven. Athuraliye Rathana, then the parliamentary group leader of the JHU. In the midst of war, in March 2008, writing to the *Herald Scotland*, Nick Meo criticized Rathana's political views on war:

> Like every Buddhist monk, the Venerable Athuraliye Rathana believes in peace, harmony and loving kindness. But unlike most, he believes

the best way to pursue such virtues is to fight a war to the death with his enemies.

Rathana, mischievously nicknamed a "war monk" by Sri Lanka's press, speaks passionately of harmony but believes it will only come after the Tamil Tigers have all been killed and their political movement decisively crushed by the army. To carry out this aim he gave up a quiet life of meditation to found a political party to press for war, winning a parliamentary seat along with nine fellow monks in 2004 on an anti-peace talks platform effectively ending hopes of a negotiated end to Sri Lanka's long-running, bitter civil conflict.

Now the monks are in the government and, with savage fighting in the north and suicide bombers attacking the capital Colombo, they are cheerleaders for generals who want to kill 500 guerrillas per month and overrun the northern enclave held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) by the end of this year. . . . Sri Lanka's war monks have played a key role in wrecking that dream.

With his robe, shaved head, and gentle demeanour, their spokesman Rathana looks every inch the man of peace until he opens his mouth. "Peace negotiations simply made the LTTE stronger," he said. "We mustn't talk to them, we can crush the LTTE. It is like surgery. I don't like war, we need peace. But the LTTE is killing people every day. The West fights terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq and, like them, we have to fight it here. It simply has to be finished. We can't go on and on." Only a minority of monks in Sri Lanka support the political party founded by the hardliners, Jāthika Hela Urumaya (JHU, the National Heritage Party), with its jumble of policies and arguments against terrorism and drinking alcohol, and vague platitudes in favour of social justice. But its underlying ideology is an ugly form of Sinhalese nationalism.

For Rathana, the long, complex war is not a matter of political power but a simple affair of good versus evil, flavoured by Sinhalese sectarianism and paranoia. He promises that after victory over the LTTE, the Tamil population in the north will be well-treated although in the past that has not happened. . . . Rathana believes the strategy is working and he is sure that he can go back to his monastery after two more years with his mission accomplished. He does not understand why foreigners think Buddhists are pacifists. The Dalai Lama once had an army, he points out, and the Buddha did not prohibit his followers from defending themselves.

He is a moderate by the party's standards. Other JHU members have made crudely sectarian threats against Tamils and there are even more extreme Buddhist monks who have on occasion brawled with peace protesters at rallies. Udaya Gammanpila, JHU deputy secretary, insists the war strategy will help Tamil civilians. "We have to kill the killer to save the innocent," he said. "We can bring happiness to people

> by destroying the LTTE." His only fear is that international pressure will stop the government from pursuing the war. "My message to foreign governments is: let us finish this our way," he added.[7]

This newspaper article generated a rich online discussion on the role of Buddhist monks in the military pursuits of the Sri Lankan Government forces. Responding to this newspaper article, Kanagan, perhaps a Tamil by birth, wrote on March 3, 2008:

> Will the war mongers, like [the] war monk and his "peace loving" monks, go to the war front and fight? Same thing goes for the GoSL [Government of Sri Lanka] politicians. Have anyone of them, let it be SLFP [f. 1951, Sri Lanka Freedom Party], JVP [f. 1966, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna], JHU, sent their children to go for the war front? Instead they want to send the children of poor Sinhalese families to fight this unwinnable war. These politicians make the country bankrupt by resorting to their luxurious living, handsome bribes and commissions earned on arm[s] deals. They whip up the emotions and make the grassroot Sri Lankans to suffer. Now Sri Lanka has drifted to fight in guerrilla war. Let's be practical. Let's learn from what happened in the World. You cannot win a guerrilla war. Go for peace. Stop this rubbish from the chauvinist extremist. Save mother Lanka.

Some reflections on the comments expressed on the newspaper article are needed. Readers' responses to the article are quite penetrating. What is striking is the discourse; the way a couple of people responded to the ideas, as well as the monk who was in spotlight in the article. Noteworthy is the diversity of opinions expressed; they show that misperceptions of each other exist among Sri Lankans. The issues raised in this online discussion show the ground reality in Sri Lanka where obstacles in tackling the conflict and managing it are significant. As a country devastated by ethno-nationalism Sri Lanka faces the collapse of law and order. A specific form of religiously couched ethno-nationalism continuously fed nearly three decades of civil war. Current political situation in Sri Lanka is stable but there are accusations of human rights violations and issues of misconduct in the war. In a fragile context, ethnic harmony, and reconciliation are very much dependent upon urgent rehabilitation aid to develop north and east of the country.

## VIOLENT PHASES OF CIVIL WAR, TERRORISM AND MILITARISM: THE JVP FACTOR IN MILITARIZING SINHALA COMMUNITIES

A new phase of violence and militarism emerged in recent decades along with the civil war between the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Unlike in the previous decades, nowadays, there are plenty of

literature in the form of Sinhala books, songs and films published frequently on military affairs, warriors and battles. It is an apt illustration of the emerging military culture at popular level within the Sri Lankan society. The three decades of civil war challenged the survival of treasured values of non-violence and ethical norms of Theravāda Buddhism.[8] This new face of violence was clearly visible from the beginning of the early 1970s. This unhealthy violent phenomenon had significant impact in deteriorating civil liberties of the ordinary citizens. This phase of violence has increased abuses and violations of human rights and devalued human lives. Increased proliferation of unauthorized arms throughout the island posed a critical challenge.

The growth of two nationalist and militant organizations (LTTE and JVP), which drew significant support from Sinhala and Tamil communities over decades, attracts attention. These organizations had humble origins as youth movements in the south and north of the island. They separately but simultaneously contributed to the increasing militancy of the Sri Lankan state. This eventually has led to the degradation of civil liberties and democratic standards of Sri Lankan politics. These two groups self-arming themselves with weapons actively contributed to violent politics and proliferation of arms throughout Sri Lanka. Their members justified taking arms into their hands since they believed in revolution and overthrowing democratically elected government through violent means. This was partly an activist political agenda of resolving the ethnic conflict and other social and economic issues such as growing poverty. Increasing unemployment, and lack of educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups, and growing income disparities among people have exacerbated this situation.

The two nationalist youth groups—JVP and LTTE—represent two sides of the same phenomenon of economic unrest and belief in revolution as the solution to the economic, political and linguistic problems which gradually pushed the peaceful Sri Lankan state into rapidly increasing militancy.

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front), known by its popular acronym JVP, carried out an insurrection in 1971. It is a Sinhalese youth movement in southern Sri Lanka primarily coming from Buddhist and rural backgrounds. It came to the public realm as a disheartened group of Sinhalese youth who initially took up arms to overthrow the democratically elected government of Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in April 1971. Once its revolutions failed twice (1971 and 1989–1990), it sought political power by becoming a mainstream political party, which used ballot box for entering the Sri Lankan parliament. Rohana Don Nandasiri Wijeweera (1943–1989), who came from a village near Matara and once was a medical student at Lumumba University, Moscow, in the early 1960s,[9] was an ardent articulator of Chinese Maoism against Soviet communism. Wijeweera with a few hundreds of youth equipped with poor and basic weapons led the first youth insurrection against the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) coalition government of Mrs. Sirima(vo) Dias Bandaranaike (b. Ratwatte, 1916–2000) which came to power in May 1970. The JVP

insurgents attempted to overthrow the government by attacking police stations around the country. This was the first significant incident of militancy and the use of violence by armed civilians with the aim of overthrowing democratically elected government in post-independence Sri Lanka.

A brief exploration of the JVP both as a militant as well as political group is relevant in understanding how certain forms of nationalism led to gradual militancy in Sinhala communities. Wijeweera had founded the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in 1966. As a youth movement, the JVP gathered new recruits in a very informal and secretive manner by giving a series of six lectures in non-public places where the youth gather to meet their peers. The JVP presented itself as a revolutionary group that wanted to change and transform the Sri Lankan society from the very beginning. Their lack of concern or the complete absence of respect for the Sri Lankan culture, heritage and religion in the initial decades was perceived as a serious social threat by the public and their resort to militancy, use of violence, intimidation, and terror to capture political power in April 1971 and 1987–89 gradually shut the public off and diminished popular support. It took decades to dispel the public fear of them as a terror group.

At the early stage, the young in rural areas with some educational qualifications such General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (OL) and Advanced Level (AL), mostly from relatively poor economic and social backgrounds with weaker employment prospects, responded eagerly to the JVP's call for revolution on the basis of Marxist ideology. The university students also had joined this movement at the time of April 1971. Like the rural youth, primarily the students of the major universities' faculties of arts, who feared unemployment after graduation, had joined. This youth contingency was the primary support base for the JVP in its first insurgency in April 1971.

After the first insurrection in April 1971, the JVP leader, Wijeweera, was arrested, convicted and jailed. But later he was freed from the prison by the United National Party government led by the first Executive President Junius Richard Jayewardene (1906–1996), who came to power in July 1977. In the wake of the first insurrection, the JVP was virtually wiped out. After Wijeweera's release, the JVP gathered more than 10 percent votes in some districts in District Development Council elections in 1981. In the presidential election in 1982, Wijeweera received over 4 percent of votes nationwide. Thus a couple of years the JVP participated in parliamentary politics. After the ethnic riots of July 1983, the JVP was banned for its alleged involvement in the ethnic riots of July 1983 and agitation. This proscription resulted in the JVP going underground. This enabled the JVP to resort to violence again in the second insurrection, which occurred in the period from 1987–1989. This time, the JVP rose against the United National Party government of J.R. Jayewardene. The immediate cause and rationale for the second insurrection was the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord on July 29, 1987, by the government.

The Indo-Sri Lanka accord aimed to bring peace by ending the fighting between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government forces. One of the provisions of the accord was to merge the northern and eastern provinces into one on the basis of a referendum and the JVP was against it. One strand of the JVP thinking was anti-Indian sentiment. One of the five lectures given to new recruits in the first insurrection was on Indian expansionism. In the second insurrection, the JVP demanded that the Sri Lankan government sends back the Indian Peace-Keeping Force that was fighting the Tamil secessionist group, the LTTE. The agitation against the Indo-Sri Lanka accord was led by the JVP[10] with the support of other nationalist parties, aided also by some Buddhist monks. The JVP terror campaign that began in subsequent years nearly killed President Jayewardene in the parliament and killed or injured several key figures of the UNP. Prime Minister R. Premadasa's succession as President in December 1988 intensified the brutality of violence and political assassinations. During Premadasa's administration, the JVP leader, Wijeweera himself was captured alive while hiding as a tea-maker and died while in police custody.

The two insurrections of April 1971 and 1987–1989 that the JVP initiated were extremely violent. Scars of that violent past still remain in the legacy of militarizing the Sri Lankan state and in the proliferation of militant groups and gangs around the island.

The second insurrection (1987–1989) was strikingly brutal. The JVP used a variety of strategies to intimidate the public. The public had to pay a great price for its civil disobedience. The insurgents used different strategies to bring the government administration to halt. They intimidated public servants and the private sector through violence and threats of violence. The JVP adopted indiscriminate killing. Its victims included police and army personnel and civil officials. Their assassinations also targeted political party activists including those of the left parties. Violence was directed to civilians as well as to Buddhist monks. Many civilians faced death and were subjected to immense suffering. Through intimidations, the JVP was able to create chaos in the administration. It was successful in implementing blackouts and the closure of businesses and offices. Island-wide intimidation compelled people to adhere to the JVP demands. There are also accusations that some young monks who were influenced by the JVP political ideology carried out some assassinations of prominent Buddhist monks.

> JVP monks were confronted with a major dilemma when their party decided on the path of 'revolutionary violence'. . . . How did the monks react? . . . While the DJV [Dēśaprēmī Janatā Viyāpāraya]/JVP did carry out assassinations of its opponents, it claimed that it was only reacting to state violence. . . . The assassination of senior monks . . . have been attributed to the DJV/JVP. These monks had broken the rule imposed by the JVP/DJV that they should not lend support to parties which were in favour of the Accord. . . . JVP monks were also exerting pressure on

> senior monks from both within and outside their traditional organization. . . . When the JVP escalated their terror tactics, leading Buddhist monks were characterized as 'traitors' and sent 'death threats'.[11]

Thus, on the side of the Sinhala nationalism, the period of 1987–1989 was one of the most brutal periods of Sri Lankan history, which subsequently led to increasing militarization of the state and military gangs and escalating violence perpetuated by the state. During both insurrections of 1971 and 1987–1989, the government had to use considerable force to control the militancy of the insurgents. During the latter period, death squads were responsible for many 'disappearances.' In both insurrections, the JVP failed to gain public support and confidence.

Perhaps due to cultural and religious reasons, most Marxist parties, which were very active in pre-independence Sri Lanka, have failed in recent few decades in electoral politics. As a Marxist political party, the JVP is an exception to that norm. Over the last four decades, the JVP has gained considerable support from the public. There is no doubt that the success of the JVP as a Marxist party in recent decades is heavily due to its nationalist preoccupation on the issue of the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. In a recent study, Rajesh Venugopal has observed:

> [T]he JVP has succeeded where other Marxists have failed, by mobilising class through the language of the nation. Similarly, they have successfully projected themselves as the defenders of the nation by presenting themselves in the garb of anti-systemic radicals authentically rooted in class politics.[12]

Some researchers have suggested that the JVP strongholds were areas where disadvantaged communities such as *vahumpura* and *batgama*[13] castes predominated. However, class more than caste is believed to be the key factor for these revolutions that increasingly militarized Sri Lanka.

Failing to overthrow the government on two occasions, the JVP gradually returned to parliamentary politics in the mid-1990s. In the general election held in 1999, the JVP was successful in securing 10 out of 225 seats in the Sri Lankan parliament. It became the third largest party there. The other two parties were the victorious Sri Lanka Freedom Party led People's Alliance and the United National Party, the parliamentary opposition. In the election of December 2001, the JVP was able to win 16 seats, polling 11 percent of the votes. For a few weeks in 2001, at a time of political instability, the JVP played a significant role by supporting the People's Alliance government of Chandrika Kumaratunga. In the mid-2000s, the JVP retained its power supporting Mahinda Rajapaksa's government to defeat the LTTE. Towards the end of 2009, the JVP began to side with General Sarath Fonseka praising his apt leadership in the conquest of the LTTE. This generated negative impact on the JVP and began to weaken its power as an influential nationalist political party.

## THE MILITARY CONQUEST OF NORTH AND EAST, THE SUBSEQUENT POLITICAL CRISIS OF THE SINHALA MAJORITY, AND THE ROLE OF MILITARY AFTER THE WAR

The civil war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sri Lankan government forces gained renewed momentum with the riots of July 23, 1983. Nearly over three decades, there were many efforts to create peace through political negotiations, ceasefire agreements, and reconciliation efforts.

As a result of failing to bring the LTTE to peaceful political negotiations, the Sri Lankan government launched a number of major military offensives against the LTTE beginning in July 2006 in order to drive out gradually the LTTE from the Eastern province. In 2007, the government shifted its offensive to the north of Sri Lanka. On January 2, 2008, it also formally announced its withdrawal from the ceasefire agreement made in 2001. In the LTTE's long military campaign against the Sri Lankan government and its forces, for the first time, the terrorists were offering to lay down their weapons in return for a guarantee of safety on May 16, 2009. Through an aggressive and difficult military operation of nearly a three-year period, sacrificing many lives the Sri Lankan government forces conquered physically and captured the entire land strips of northern and eastern provinces and formally ended civil war in Sri Lanka by defeating the LTTE militarily on May 17, 2009.[14] Nearly over two decades much of this land area was partially or fully under the LTTE control; civilians of that area were subjected to frequent LTTE terrorism.

In today's changing social and political landscape of Sri Lanka, military has assumed some important roles. Over the years, the Sri Lankan government has appointed a total of 22 persons of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces and Police to diplomatic missions. The breakdown of military and police personnel who held diplomatic posts in the past or are holding them currently show significant emphasis and recognition of the performance of the Sri Lankan Army. Out of 22 diplomats, two were policemen, two from the Air Force, four from the Sri Lankan Navy and an overwhelming majority (nearly two thirds), a total of fourteen persons are from the Sri Lankan Army. It is significant that the government has posted some of the top military commanders as diplomats to Malaysia, Japan, Israel, Germany, and the UN in New York.[15]

Some of these diplomatic appointments of military personnel have raised serious opposition from the Tamil diaspora such as the case when the former Navy Commander, Admiral Wasantha Karannagoda was designated as Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to the UK. As the Commander of the Sri Lankan Navy, he increased deep sea operations against the LTTE which resulted in destroying over eight LTTE ships within a year. In the midst of diaspora opposition to his diplomatic appointment, the government changed the plan and appointed him as the Ambassador to the Sri

Lankan mission in Tokyo, Japan. Some of his robust diplomatic engagements are noteworthy. When others were fleeing from the area due to fear of radiation, Admiral Karannagoda became the first diplomat who was brave enough to visit Tsunami affected areas in Japan.[16] As the first official engagement, visiting Fukushima region, Admiral Karannagoda filled 750 plates of Sri Lankan curry to Tsunami evacuees.[17]

It is outstanding that Major General Shavendra Silva was appointed to the United Nations, New York in 2010 considering the fact that he was the former Director of Operations of the Sri Lanka Army and the General Commanding Officer of the 58th Division in the successful military conquest against the LTTE that ended in May 2009. During the war years, Major General Silva had an impressive career. In 2002–2004 peace talks, Major General Silva took part in negotiations to open the A-9 Main Supply Route to the north. He become the Brigade Commander of the Air Mobile Brigade and took command of the 58th Division of the Sri Lanka Army, which was instrumental in capturing several LTTE strongholds such as Mannar rice Bowl, Vedithalathivu, Nachchikuda, Mulangavil, Devils Point, Pooneryn, Kilinochchi, Paranthan, Elephant Pass, Dharmapuram, Vishvamadu, Suvandipuram, Thevipuram Puthukudirippu, Puthumathalan, Wellamullu vaikkal and the last portion of enemy-held Karayamulliavaikkal in the mangroves of Nanthikandal lagoon in the Mullaithivu district.

Rather than decreasing, Sri Lanka's defence budget is growing in the post-war period. With its twenty-one million-strong population, Sri Lanka has around 350,000 armed forces members. The Sri Lankan government has decided to use its armed forces in the post-war redevelopment. Some have argued that it is a way of using the military in a constructive manner. A recent writer comments on recent debates and demonstrates implications of the use of armed forces in the post-war reconstruction of North and East of Sri Lanka as follows:

> Three of Sri Lanka's international cricket stadiums, . . . have been handed over to the military indefinitely because Sri Lanka Cricket is unable to afford the maintenance costs. . . . The reason for this unconventional allocation of responsibilities appears to be economic. . . . This is not the first time that the government has handed over economic responsibilities to the armed forces. . . . Some months ago the government deployed army troops to sell vegetables[18] and bring down the cost of living for the country's urban population at a time when drought conditions had made vegetable prices soar. Today the air force operates commercial flights to various places within the country and the navy conducts whale-watching tours for tourists.[19] With the salaries of armed forces personnel being met out of the defence budget, it is likely that the military units engaging in these commercial ventures are able to show operating profits. In addition the efficiency of the armed forces is an established fact after the defeat of the LTTE.

At the present time the prestige of the Sri Lankan armed forces is very high within the country. There is much appreciation of the sacrifice and valour of the three services that vanquished the LTTE, which international commentators had elevated to the status of the world's deadliest terrorist organization. There were many international military experts who believed that winning the war against the LTTE was going to be an impossible task, . . . But after three decades of experience in battling the LTTE, the Sri Lankan armed forces were sufficiently professionalized and equipped to prevail. As a result many other countries that are involved in anti-terrorist operations are studying the Sri Lankan strategy. There is today an image of the Sri Lankan military as a highly effective fighting force.

During the war the size of the military had to be increased to tackle the LTTE. . . . The elimination of the LTTE as a fighting force therefore paved the way for a substantial reduction in the size of the armed forces. After the end of the war the size of the Sri Lankan military was expected to decrease, if not significantly at least gradually to represent the return to normalcy and de-militarization of society.

Demobilisation of excess troop capacity after war helps to release economic resources for massive post-war reconstruction and to get the development process restarted. This was the reasonable expectation in the light of the experience in most other post-war societies. However, Sri Lanka appears to following a post-war path of its own that is quite unlike that found in most other democratic countries. It has expanded the size of the armed forces after the war and also continuously been increasing the size of the defence budget. The government has also taken the unusual step of combining the defence ministry with the urban development authority and renamed the ministry to be the ministry of defence and urban development. The urban development authority was placed under the control of the defence ministry last year. Now the army is considering building and operating a luxury five star hotel in Colombo.

In most democratic countries the role of the military is restricted to protecting the country from internal and external security threats. This is the area of their special competence, for which they receive special training. They are strictly prohibited from getting involved in commercial activities or in matters of governance. . . . It is only in exceptional situations, such as the natural disaster that struck Japan in the form of a combined earthquake, tsunami and nuclear leak in Fukushima, that the military was temporarily deployed for rescue operations.

The take over and running of the international cricket stadiums . . . by the three services needs to be assessed also in the light of what is happening today in the North and East of the country. The recent report of the Tamil National Alliance in Parliament states that "The military is increasingly involved in economic activity in the North and East.[20] Through its system of checkpoints, the military ensures that its proxies control the transportation of fish from the Northern coastal areas.

> Large sections of beach front land in the Eastern province have been parcelled out to companies which are headed by military officers. The military has established a string of restaurants along the main Jaffna highway. An entire military tourism industry catering to Southern visitors is run by the military establishment. The Navy uses state resources to run ferry services for the Southern tourist industry. Military personnel also run various quasi-commercial enterprises such as shops and salons that are highly irregular and impact negatively on the local economies. However, it is not only a question of hidden costs, subsidies and issues of economic efficiency. The greater danger is the increased possibility of encroachment on civilian control of government.[21]

The role of war-heroes is becoming more and more important. There is a reality TV show entitled *Raṇaviru* (war-hero) dedicated to war heroes on the national television Rūpavāhiṇī.[22]

Nationalism that supported war efforts of the Sri Lankan government contained a strong utilitarian and pragmatic outlook. All nationalist groups with different and incompatible ideologies with each other supported government forces in order to defeat terrorism. However, the good news of the hard-earned military victory did not last for a long time. Even before a half-year passes, the victorious party—the government and its leading war general—had a serious dispute over the victory in war. The dispute was concerned with who should take credits of the military victory—President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, or General Sarath Fonseka. Earlier in the face of a common enemy, threatened by terrorism and bombs, they were united to fight but after the victory, they were highly divided in sharing the result. Enjoying the credits for eliminating the threat of terrorism was the most critical issue. The dispute was rather severe and the war hero had to step down from the government post claiming that the members of President Rajapaksa's family mistreated him.

This led to an election campaign in which General Sarath Fonseka challenged the ruling party candidate President Rajapaksa in the Presidential election held on January 26, 2010. On the basis of this dispute, the current political landscape in Sri Lanka has changed drastically. After the election victory, on 8th February 2010, President Rajapaksa's government arrested General Fonseka and court-martialed him and placed in prison for more than two years until his release on Monday 21st May 2012.[23] Over the years dissatisfied forces have gathered around the military general that waged war against the LTTE under the guidance of President Rajapaksa. The nationalist forces that earlier worked immensely to support and encourage President Mahinda Rajapaksa to wage war against the LTTE and defeat it militarily, after the victory have changed their direction.

An important, young, leading monastic spokesperson for the JVP, Ven. Dambara Amila, spoke publicly why his party favors General Sarath Fonseka as a presidential candidate. Ven. Dambara Amila holds an academic post of Senior Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology

at Sri Jayawardhanapura University. He also serves as the president of the Dēśahitaishī Jāthika Madhyastānaya.

To work for the Presidential election campaign of General Fonseka, Ven. Amila cut short his trip to the UK for attending his preceptor who was undergoing bypass heart surgery in London and returned to Colombo from London in the night of December 21, 2009. On Wednesday, December 23, 2009, he held a media event in the headquarters of Dēśahitaishī Jāthika Madhyastānaya in Rājagiriya. In that news conference, he expressed his support for General Fonseka's candidacy for the post of President.[24] His speech on that occasion became politically controversial and the government put Ven. Amila in the prison accusing him of the alleged bribery. Ven. Amila maintained that:

> It is President Mahinda Rajapaksa who has kept avenues open for foreign powers to interfere with matters of this country. In the forthcoming Presidential election, when General Sarath Fonseka secures victory, we will block all the avenues that allow foreign powers to interfere with matters of this country.[25]

Among the vernacular, local newspapers, the report in the *Laṅkādīpa* newspaper gives a fuller account of Ven. Amila's speech. It highlights very much various aspects of the changing shape of Sinhala nationalism. At that media event, Ven. Dambhara Amila had stated that they have decided to support General Sarath Fonseka, the common candidate of the opposition in the forthcoming Presidential election.

> Ven. Amila said that General Sarath Fonseka is the honest and only candidate who can establish democracy in this country. He said further that Dēśahitaishī movement makes a special appeal to the public to join them in the meritorious deed of helping General Sarath Fonseka, who is politically pure and heroic, to win the forthcoming presidential election.
>
> Ven. Amila stated that President Mahinda Rajapaksa called for a Presidential election on an inappropriate occasion with a bad intention of coming to power again and following a dictatorship path. Without seeking a snap election, the President could have established the proposed Commission Sabhas [for enquiring about bribes, etc.] and waited to hold the presidential election in two years time. According to Ven. Amila, President Rajapaksa fails the examination carried out by Dēśahitaishī Jātika Madhayasthānaya and General Sarath Fonseka is the most suitable person to create national freedom in this country in the present and to reestablish democracy. He is a heroic leader who does what he says, says only what he does.
>
> The government makes various accusations to him such as that General Sarath Fonseka has no political experience, etc. and all those are lies. General Sarath Fonseka performed a heroic duty of freeing

> this country from terrorism and there are no doubts about his skills and maturity. In this Presidential election, therefore, the Dēśahitaishī Jātika Madhayasthānaya supports General Sarath Fonseka and wants him to win. In the past, we dedicated ourselves and supported the election victory of President Mahinda Rajapaksa but today we support the victory of General Sarath Fonseka.
>
> Today President Mahinda Rajapaksa is caught up in foreigners' conspiracy. A few days after winning the war, India forced President Mahinda Rajapaksa to make some changes in the higher positions in the military. It is not only that President Rajapaksa has come to a secret agreement with Douglas Devananda but also for two or three votes from Jaffna he is now getting ready to betray this country again. President Rajapaksa has agreed to the demand of self-determination of the separatists of the past and accepted the notion of a separate nation, etc.
>
> We request the public to dedicate support to secure victory to General Sarath Fonseka. It is a great meritorious deed. This flower basket is pure. Everyone must share it. We expect that everyone who loves the motherland pay attention to this.[26]

These political developments in the post-war Sri Lanka show new faces of Sri Lankan nationalism. In celebrating the victory in the war against terrorism, the majority itself is divided now. The parties who have responsibility of rehabilitating the north and east have completely forgotten or ignored their commitments.

A detailed analysis of Ven. Amila's provocative and controversial speech demonstrates the changing phases of nationalism in the Sri Lankan post-war politics. As typical of the JVP political ethos, in the Ven. Amila's speech it is clear that there are strong sentiments towards foreign interference in Sri Lankan political affairs as happened in the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord in July 1987.

Ven. Amila's statement was a real political challenge for President Mahinda Rajapaksa who had allegedly signed an agreement with Douglas Devananda[27] accepting the demand for self-determination and the notion of traditional homeland concept. As an important feature of growing nationalism, Amila's statement also shows his fear and distrust of foreign powers. He claims:

> One avenue that allowed foreign powers to interfere with matters of this country was the separatist terrorist front, which is now finished. But patriotic people cannot rest now thinking that everything is finished. By finishing off the Chief Tiger in Vellamullivayikkal, one avenue for interference was closed; we must now close other avenues that white man can use to interfere in the affairs of Sri Lanka—by erasing the Presidential system, by establishing democracy, and by implementing the seventeenth amendment.[28] If General Sarath Fonseka comes

> to power, these avenues will be closed and then white man cannot interfere.
>
> If General Sarath Fonseka is with white man, will they send him these letters? It is disadvantages for him. If he is an agent of white man, he will not question them. General Sarath Fonseka is an agent of indigenous forces. General Sarath Fonseka has not signed an agreement with someone to implement the demands for self-determination or to establish a Tamil homeland. That alone is enough for patriotic powers of this country to support General Fonseka. Therefore, with a greater speed than what we put to bring President Mahinda Rajapaksa to power, we will use our energy to prevent him from gaining power again by securing the victory of General Sarath Fonseka.[29]

Ven. Amila had asserted to defeat President Rajapaksa since the latter is not capable of securing peace. Ven. Amila's public statement to the media against President Mahinda Rajapaksa and expressing support to Sarath Fonseka in the Presidential Election had drawn the attention of the government to take strict measures. As pointed out in the media by prominent opposition politicians,[30] though complaint was against the driver, who had taken money for providing employment abroad,[31] rather than arresting him the police arrested Ven. Amila. The complaint was against the driver who received thirty lakhs. This alleged accusation raised questions about the entire affair. It also alleged that a special unit of CID (Crime Investigation Department) has been established to arrest politicians and individuals who support General Sarath Fonseka.[32] Some academics argued that Ven. Amila was arrested because of political necessity.[33] They stated that accusations against Ven. Amila cannot be accepted and the truth behind his arrest was that he spoke bravely in public. The arrest of Ven. Amila led to more protests. In the evening of December 28, 2009, Jātika Bhiksu Peramuna held a *satyagraha* (non-violent protest) in front of the Bodhi tree in Pettah[34] demanding the release of Ven. Amila who had been placed in remand custody with the alleged accusation of taking money from three youth for providing foreign employment.

For the Presidential election of January 26, 2010, the New Democratic Front appointed Mr. Sarath Fonseka as the common candidate of the opposition. The selection of Fonseka, the victorious military leader of the Sri Lankan government's war against the LTTE, as the common candidate of the opposition for the Presidential election raised critical and incongruous issues.[35] The most significant feature was that political support for the former military leader derived from incompatible and hostile parties. This mobilization of activist opposition to President Rajapaksa was primarily a union of two opposing groups—one group[36] was perceived by the public at large as always ready to divide the country and give to terrorists through quasi-peace agreements and the other, in fact, twice, attempted to overthrow democratically elected governments by taking up arms against them.[37]

The JVP has made clear why it took a different position of appointing a common candidate against the presidency of Mahinda Rajapaksa.[38] Just before the Presidential election on September 8, 2005, the JVP had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mahinda Rajapaksa. One of the agreements was before the expiration of the first term of presidency, he would eliminate executive presidency. The JVP believes that Rajapaksa went to elections for the second time by violating those promises. This seems to be the major disagreement for their abandonment of the Rajapaksa government. According to the JVP, Rajapaksa wanted to become President not to develop the country but to secure power within the parliament; other accusations are that through executive legislative powers lead the country to dictatorship while strengthening and securing his family links including three of his brothers. This situation was seen as a grave danger to democracy. According to them, Rajapaksa proved that he does not respect democracy. He avoided the implementation of the seventeenth amendment to the constitution. Therefore, it is seen as a violation of election laws. He uses government power abusively to control opponents. Since Rajapaksa has demonstrated legislative dictatorship, they perceive that it is dangerous to appoint him for another six-year term.[39] Therefore in the current context, they see the necessity to secure democracy. Thus they urged to eliminate executive presidency. Therefore, the JVP began this battle with a neutral candidate.

The nationalism that led to the military action took different shape after military victory. The obstacles placed against the war hero General Sarath Fonseka formed political discussions. The opposition leader, Ranil Wickremasinghe, "accused the government of violating the constitution by trying to destroy the Theravāda Buddhism in the island." According to him "a certain section of Buddhist monks (a Heretic Sect) have threatened to divide the main Nikaya." Speaking to journalists, he said the threats made to Mahānāyaka *thera*[40] of the Malwatta Chapter "by certain leading Buddhist monks to cancel the Thursday's proposed Sangha convention [February 18, 2010] or they would divide the Malwatta Chapter."[41] His accusations went to the government saying that the government "bound to secure and protect Buddhism as per the country's constitution, has been 'sponsoring' these threats." "These monks have said that they would take over some temples belong to Malwatta Chapter and hand over them to another Chapter."

In the context of lawlessness in Sri Lanka, right after the election victory, the Mahānāyaka *thera*s, preeminent monks of Sri Lanka, convened a conference in Kandy to discuss the status of problems in the country. The four Mahānāyaka *thera*s of the three chapters called a Mahāsaṅgha Assembly to be held in Kandy on February 18, 2010, to discuss the political situation with regard to General Fonseka. The government intimidated the organizers by persuading the Saṅgha not to hold the meeting.

Joining the debate about the postponement of the Buddhist conference in Kandy, Ven. Prof. Athangane Rathanapāla Nāyaka *thera* said[42] that the

proposed Mahāsaṅgha Assembly was never cancelled and the Mahānāyaka *thera* of the Malwatta Chapter hopes to reschedule and summon the postponed Mahāsaṅgha Assembly in the future. Briefing reporters, Rathanapāla Nāyaka *thera* said that the media conference was called with the knowledge of the Malwatta Mahānāyaka *thera* and "Various sections associated with the government had approached and tried to influence the Mahānāyaka *thera*s not to hold the Saṅgha Assembly and it was decided to postpone the assembly considering security of all." The Mahānāyaka *thera*s called up the Saṅgha Assembly since "democracy and good governance were now in an uncertain state and described this as "disastrous" for Sri Lanka's future."[43] This placed undue pressure on the Mahānāyaka *thera*s.

## CONCLUSION

With a focus on the majority Sri Lankan ethnic group, this chapter has examined how certain forms of nationalism (i.e., Sinhala) informed the gradual militarization of Sri Lanka since the early 1970s. It has concentrated on politically active Buddhist groups (i.e., JHU) and political parties (i.e., JVP). The chapter has explored how some Sinhala Buddhist groups of political influence such as the JHU and the leftist political party, the JVP, have contributed to varying degrees to form strong expressions of nationalism, which eventually led to rapid militarization of the Sinhala society, its politics and government.

Even after three years of the military victory over the LTTE, it has not been easy for the Sri Lankan government to reduce its reliance on the military. Still today most of the rehabilitation work including the clearance of land mines, road constructions and ensuring proper maintenance of the entire apparatus of peace and security in the east and north of Sri Lanka to a large extent depend on the performance of the Sri Lankan armed forces.

In addition, in the post-war period, the Sri Lankan military has assumed duties to provide several public services. Soon after the war in May 2009, the Sri Lankan Air Force used some of its fleet to introduce a commercial air service, Heli Tours, for booming tourism.[44] Many new civilian roles that the armed forces assumed in the post-war period include running open markets, providing mandatory military-led training for university entrants, selling vegetables, engaging in construction and development work and providing public services such as eradication of mosquitoes. In light of the changing shape of the military and its increasing roles within the Sri Lankan society, the Defence Ministry itself was renamed as the Defence and Urban Development Ministry.

It is noteworthy that the Sri Lankan government assigned the Army, Navy, and Air Force the responsibility of maintaining three international cricket grounds in November 2011. Following previous models, the

government has also taken steps to post some of the eminent military commanders as diplomats.

It is notable the fact of appointing the retired Navy Admiral Wasantha Karannagoda as the Sri Lankan ambassador to Japan in March 2011 and Major General Shavendra Silva while still on active duty as the Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York in 2010.

These examples show both the Sri Lankan government's heavy reliance on the armed forces and its promotion of further militarization of Sri Lanka. On another level, General Sarath Fonseka's candidacy for the presidency proposed by the United National Party and the JVP as the main opposition candidate in order to challenge the incumbent President Rajapaksa can be taken as another instance of a general tendency in the civil society and in the popular imagination of the ordinary persons who are used to phases of militarization to further militarize the Sri Lankan society and culture. In the post-war period, this reliance of the Sri Lankan government on the armed forces for normalizing the north and east is expected to continue for a few more years until strong civil government networks are established in the war-affected areas.

## NOTES

1. With regard to Sri Lanka's war crimes and violation of human rights, on 22 March 2012, the 19th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva passed a resolution (19/2) on "Promoting Reconciliation and Accountability in Sri Lanka" with 24 votes in favour, 15 against and 8 abstentions (http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session19/Pages/ResDecStat.aspx; accessed 29 April 2012).
2. G.P.V. Somaratna, *Kotahena Riot 1883: A Religious Riot in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Deepanee Publishers, 1991).
3. Torkel Brekke, "Beyond Theological Essentialism and Ethnic Reductionism: A Review Essay about Religion and the Peace Process in Sri Lanka," *International Journal of Buddhist Thought and Culture* 12 (2009): 127.
4. For a detailed analysis of religious factors that were in the background which subsequently led to the birth of the JHU, see Mahinda Deegalle, "Religious Concerns in the Ethno-politics of Sri Lanka," *The Mahachulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies* 2 (2009): 79–109 and in particular the section on Venerable Soma's death in St. Petersburg (pp. 98–104).
5. For specific details about the birth of the JHU and their vision of *Dharmarajya*, see Mahinda Deegalle, "JHU Politics for Peace and a Rightous State," *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka*, ed. Mahinda Deegalle (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 233–254.
6. Jayadeva Uyangoda, "Sri Lanka: A Fractured Mandate," *South Asian Journal*, 5 (July–Sept.) 2004 (http://www.southasianmedia.net/Magazine/journal/fractured_mandate.htm; accessed 10 September 2010).
7. Nick Meo, "Rise of 'War Monk' Sparks Fears of Bloodier Conflict," *Herald Scotland*, March 2, 2008 (http://www.sundayherald.com/international/shinternational/display.var.2086752.0.0.php?act=complaint&cid=1218861; accessed 10 September 2010).
8. For an exposition of norms of war and justifications for the use of force in Buddhism see Mahinda Deegalle, "Norms of War in Theravada Buddhism,"

*World Religions and Norms of War*, ed. Vesselin Popovski, Gregory M. Reichberg and Nicholas Turner (Tokyo, New York and Paris: United Nations University Press, 2009), pp. 60–86.

9. In fact, once Wijeweera returned to Sri Lanka for holiday in 1964, he was denied reentry visa to continue his studies in medicine. C.A. Gunawardena, *Encyclopedia of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 2003), 318.
10. Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed?: Religion, Politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 45, 98–99.
11. Sarath Amunugama, "Buddhaputra and Bhumiputra? Dilemmas of Modern Sinhala Buddhist Monks in Relation to Ethnic and Political Conflict," *Religion* 21 (1991): 132–34.
12. Rajesh Venugopal, "The Politics of Sri Lanka's Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)," (private circulation, November 2008, forthcoming in *Modern Asian Studies*), 29.
13. These castes had jobs such as making jaggery, feeding elephants, carrying palanquins, and smeltering iron.
14. Violations of human rights and abuses of war captives during this three-year period of military conquest of the Sri Lankan armed forces are the subject of two controversial documentaries produced by Channel 4: (a) *Sri Lanka's Killing Fields: Alleged War Crimes in Sri Lanka* (14 Jun 2011) and (b) *Sri Lanka's Killing Fields: War Crimes Unpunished* (14 March 2012). See http://srilanka.channel4.com/ (accessed 27 April 2012).
15. Mandana Ismail Abeywickrema, "The Militarisation of Sri Lanka's Diplomatic And Administrative Services," http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2011/01/23/the-militarisation-of-sri-lanka%E2%80%99s-diplomatic-and-administrative-services/ (accessed 29 April 2012).
16. "Ambassador Karannagoda Visits Evacuation Centres in Japan," http://www.onsrilanka.info/?p=3317 (accessed 29 April 2012).
17. http://95116500.at.webry.info/201104/article_8.html; http://www.jica.go.jp/story/interview/interview_102.html (accessed 29 April 2012).
18. Vijay Nagaraj, "The Sri Lankan Army is Selling Vegetables," http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jan/28/sri-lanka-army-military (accessed 29 April 2012).
19. Though I was born in Sri Lanka, I was never able to visit Nāgadīpa Vihāra, one of the sixteen pilgrimage sites, located on the island of Nainativu in the Jaffna Peninsula, because of the war years. In the summer of 2010, for the first time, I visited Nāgadīpa, which is considered as the site of the Buddha's second visit to Sri Lanka. Today the Sri Lankan Navy maintains a boat service enabling pilgrims to visit Nāgadīpa.
20. "Commander of the Army Declares Open 'Thalsevana', the Luxurious Holiday Resort in Jaffna," http://www.army.lk/detailed.php?NewsId=2681 (accessed 29 April 2012).
21. Jehan Perera, "Economic and Political Costs of Over-extending Military Role," http://www.peace-srilanka.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=414:economic-and-political-costs-of-over-extending-military-role&catid=1:latest&Itemid=121 (accessed 29 April 2012).
22. http://www.lankachannel.com.lk/rupavahini-coperation/ranaviru-real-star-27th-may-2011-video_2032f301d.html (accessed 29 April 2012).
23. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/srilanka/9280042/Former-Sri-Lanka-army-chief-Sarath-Fonseka-freed-from-prison.html# (accessed 6 June 2012).

24. Dambhara Amila Himi, "*Sarat Fonseka Jayaggrahaṇaya kaḷa pasu vijātika balavēgavalaṭa mädihatvīmaṭa äti kavulu siyalla vasā damanavā*" (We will block all avenues that are open for foreign powers to interfere after Sarath Fonseka's election victory), *Lakbima* 24 (December 2009): 5.
25. Dambhara Amila Himi, "*Sarat Fonseka Jayaggrahaṇaya kaḷa pasu vijātika balavēgavalaṭa mädihatvīmaṭa äti kavulu siyalla vasā damanavā*," 5.
26. Dambhara Amila, "*Mevara janapativaranayedi janarālṭa sahaya paḷakirīmaṭa apa thīraṇaya kaḷā*" (We decided to support the General in this Presidential Election), *Laṅkādīpa*, 24 December 2009: 10. Translated by Mahinda Deegalle.
27. Now a Sri Lankan Tamil politician, the leader of the Eelam People's Democratic Party, and a Cabinet Minister of Rajapaksa government but originally a Tamil militant who fought against the Sri Lankan government forces for an independent Tamil Eelam.
28. The seventeenth amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution added a new chapter on the constitutional council. Details can be found at http://www.priu.gov.lk/Cons/1978Constitution/SeventeenthAmendment.html (accessed 30 April 2012). The constitutional council recommends appointments to several commissions such as election, public service, police, human rights and the investigation of allegations of bribery or corruption.
29. *Lakbima* 24 (December 2009): 5.
30. For example, comments by Anura Kumara Disanayaka, the leader of the Parliamentary group of the JVP.
31. *Divayina* 29 (December 2009): 1.
32. *Divayina* 29 (December 2009): 4.
33. For example, Chandana Aberatna, Senior Lecturer of History at University of Kelaniya and President of Union of University Teachers (Jatika Visvavidyalayiya Acarya Sandhana), *Divayina* 29 (December 2009): 4.
34. *Divayina* 29 (December 2009): 1.
35. According to Professor Pandula Andagama, President of Sri Lanka Kalamandala, it is an attempt to make Sri Lanka anarchic. *Dinamina* 30 (December 2009): 17.
36. This refers to the main opposition, United National Party (UNP).
37. This refers to the JVP insurgencies.
38. For example, Tilvin Silva, MP and General Secretary of the JVP, explained why the party took a different stand. *Laṅkādīpa* 3 (January 2010): 14.
39. *Laṅkādīpa* 3 (January 2010): 14.
40. The Pāli term *thera* means an 'elder' monk. In this case, 'Mahānāyaka *thera*' refers to the chief patriarch of the Malwatta Chapter of the Siyam fraternity.
41. See "Even Mahanayakes Are Not Spared From Threats, Intimidation And Blackmail," *Sri Lanka Guardian*, February 24, 2010 (http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2010/02/even-mahanayakes-are-not-spared-from.html (accessed 29 April 2012).
42. "Maha Sangha Assembly never cancelled," (February 18, 2010) http://www.bbc.co.uk/sinhala/news/story/2010/02/100218_poponement.shtml (accessed 29 April 2012).
43. "Maha Sangha Assembly never cancelled," (February 18, 2010) http://www.bbc.co.uk/sinhala/news/story/2010/02/100218_poponement.shtml (accessed 29 April 2012).
44. http://srilankawonderofasia.wordpress.com/2011/12/05/heli-tours-to-add-16-helicopters-to-fleet/ (accessed 29 April 2012).

45. On November 3, 2011, three international cricket stadia—R. Premadasa Stadium, Colombo (Sri Lankan Air Force), The Pallekele Stadium, Kandy (Sri Lankan Navy), Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium, Hambantota (Sri Lankan Army)—were given to the military for maintenance. See "Sri Lanka Hands Cricket Ground Maintenance to Military," http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/11/04/idINIndia-60327220111104 (accessed 29 April 2012) and Sri Lanka Army to Run Cricket Stadiums," http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-15574128 (accessed 29 April 2012).

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# 2 Military Temples and Saffron-Robed Soldiers

## Legitimacy and the Securing of Buddhism in Southern Thailand

*Marte Nilsen*

The motorbike carrying my field assistant and I made a turn from the scorching asphalt onto a dirt track road leading up to the temple. I was searching for the abbot to ask for an interview. As we reached the gate of the *wat* (temple), we were stopped by a group of soldiers resting at the *sala* (a roofed reclining area) by the entrance. A senior soldier enquired my field assistant on who we were and what business we had there. "*Luang pho* (venerable father) is not here today," the soldier informed her. Escaping for the shade of a nearby tree, my initial thoughts were: this is not a *wat* at all. This is a military camp. Could my field assistant, when suggesting to seek out this particular *wat*, have not known that it had been abandoned for military purposes? All I could see were soldiers and military vehicles.[1]

I was wrong and I was right. It was certainly a temple. Returning a couple of days later I got to meet the abbot. But it also resembled a military camp. The number of soldiers and military personnel more than outnumbered the monks and novices living there. No wonder I was taken by surprise when I first arrived at the *wat*. However, after visiting many other temples around Thailand's southernmost provinces, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, I got used to the sight of both monks and soldiers operating on the same grounds. Most commonly, there are only small groups of soldiers to protect the temples against attacks from the outside, although some temples, like the one described here, also provide lodging for larger groups of soldiers operating outside of the temple area. Thus, this initial feeling of confusion is rather descriptive for the impressions one obtains in southern Thailand's Patani region, where the interaction between Buddhism, state power, and the military is complex and increasingly intertwined.[2]

Securing Buddhism in the Malay Muslim dominated Patani region has been a long running task of state sponsored Buddhism and militarization. Ever since the former kingdom of Patani formally was annexed by the Siamese king in 1909, policies of establishing Buddhist temples and monuments, as well as ensuring a steady Buddhist population, has been stimulated and initiated by both national authorities and royal institutions. Due to returning Malay Muslim separatist insurgencies the military has also been contributing to this mission and since the resurgence of violence

in the first years of this millennium, which is increasingly attacking Buddhist institutions and propagating anti-Buddhist sentiments, a new development in this long-running conflict, the military presence has escalated accordingly. Moreover, with some temple grounds functioning as *de facto* military bases and controversial practices of soldiers ordaining as monks, while continuing to serve the military and in some extreme cases even continuing carrying arms (so-called military monks), the securing of the Buddhist religion in the deep south has reached a new level.

In this chapter I will look into these current developments of militarization of Buddhism in the deep south of Thailand and seek to investigate how the concept of Dhammaraja-Buddhism and the idea of Thainess in modern Thai history have provided legitimacy to the involvement of state power and militarization within the Buddhist domain and thus helped pave the way for these developments.

## THE STRUGGLE OVER PATANI

The three southernmost provinces of Thailand, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, which once formed parts of the Malay Muslim sultanate of Patani ($15^{th}$-$20^{th}$ century ),[3] and in earlier times constituted parts of the Brahman-Buddhist kingdom of Lankasuka ($6^{th}$-$13^{th}$ century),[4] have a rich history of ethnic, and religious diversity. As a bustling port and centre of trade the city of Patani, situated in today's Yaring district just outside of modern day Mueang Pattani, attracted Chinese, Indians, Arabs, and Europeans, as well as people from all over the Malay world and mainland Southeast Asia.[5] Ethnic and religious diversity has for centuries been a trademark in this region, and still is.

Patani remained independent while paying tribute to other kingdoms, most notably the King of Siam. It progressed and expanded, at times when Siam was weak and threatened by rivalling kingdoms, sometimes even rebelled against its powerful overlord, while it subordinated itself whenever Siam grew strong. The relations between Patani and Siam shifted in accordance with the political power play, and thus grew increasingly tense by the end of the $19^{th}$ century. In 1902 Patani was annexed by Siam, a takeover which was consolidated in the Anglo-Siamese treaty of 1909 drawing up the border between Siam and Malaya.[6]

While the affiliation with Siam for long had been a strained one, the annexation sparked an enraged antagonism among the Patani elite loyal to the last Sultan of Patani who fled for Kelantan with his family, an elite which came to form the base of a separatist movement struggling for an independent Patani state. Waves of separatist insurgencies have ever since time and again rolled in over the Patani region. However, although the early separatist movements were initiated by the old aristocratic elites, throughout Thai history the southern separatist movements have not been

particularly homogenous. Inspired by and cooperating with the Malaysian Chinese Communist guerrillas, the insurgency in the 1960s and 1970s was somewhat influenced by leftist ideologies, while the separatist movements of today, promotes a strong Islamic rhetoric alongside with their ethnic nationalist message. Thus the base for recruiting militants has also varied depending on the political and ideological dynamics in the movements.

This latest wave of insurgency is by far the deadliest, threatening a wider range of people as it is not only police, soldiers, and government officials who are targeted, but also ordinary citizens, both Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims. Moreover, with the murder of a 64-year old Buddhist monk returning from his morning alms round in Narathiwat on 22nd January, 2004, and the killing of additionally two monks in Yala two days later, where the youngest victim was a 13-yearold novice, the insurgency had also taken a decisive turn. While the conflict had earlier more or less solely concerned Malay Muslim nationalist separatists and Thai military and security personnel, the killing of Buddhist monks marked a change in the conflict, an escalation, where the local people and their communities were directly targeted, and thus, according to the report of the National Reconciliation Commission of 2006, the ties that bind Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims in the area suffered grave damage and were replaced by mistrust.[7]

By January 2010, more than 4000 people had been killed and over 6500 had been injured in the deep south since 4th January, 2004, the date most commonly set to mark the outbreak of the resurgence.[8] The large majority of these casualties are believed to be victims of insurgent separatist violence.[9] The security situation in the Patani region has for long been a continuous priority by Thai authorities and the area has more or less permanently been under Martial Law, culminating with the highly criticised Emergency Decree from 2005.[10] In periods of time large groups of military personnel have been stationed in the southern military camps, and various groups of paramilitaries and militias have also been organized. During the last insurgency we have seen a great increase in such paramilitary groups.[11] An ongoing war-like situation between the military and police on the one hand, and more or less unidentified guerrilla groups of Malay Muslim separatists on the other, has become the normality in the south.

Moreover, the lack of trust between Malay speaking villagers and Thai authorities has also characterized life in the deep south, and Malay Muslim grievances are a second major challenge troubling any Thai government. To combine these two concerns, however, the security threat and the concern for the ethnic minority (which in the Patani region constitutes a clear majority), is not an easy task, and too often the security situation has undermined the needs and concerns of local people, leading to reinforced alienation among Malay Muslims.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, policies towards the Patani region have varied considerably, depending on what political regime has been in power in Bangkok. At the same time, however, some patterns can be found.

One clear pattern has been the attempt to assimilate Malay Muslims into Thai society, where Thai standard education and language, being key integrating factors, have been promoted as the most stable, long-running, and relatively successful strategy. However, heavy restrictions on cultural and religious expressions imposed at more oppressive times as part of this same pattern, particularly dominant under the early regime of Field Marshal Phibul in the 1940s, as well as later on under Field Marshal Sarit's administration in the 1960s, have led to more resentment among Malay Muslims. A second pattern to be found is the more multifaceted effort to secure Buddhism in the south, which is the subject matter of this chapter.

## BUDDHISM AND STATE POWER IN THE SOUTH

The population in the Patani region is about 70-80 per cent Malay Muslim, and for the Thai authorities a stable Buddhist population is crucial in order to claim legitimacy over the region. At the same time, for the Buddhist community, the Sangha as well as for local Buddhists, Buddhist temples and monuments are imperative to uphold the strong Buddhist roots in the area, going back to the Lankasuka era and the early Buddhist monasteries. Although these were predominantly of Mahāyāna schools,[12] later on, remains of Theravāda history are also to be found and are of great importance to the local Buddhist community.[13]

From the local Buddhists' perspective, maintaining older Buddhist sites as well as supporting local temples and local monks is of great importance. The fact that the teaching of the Buddha through history has been present in the Patani region, alongside with the Muslim faith, is something many Thai Buddhists I interviewed liked to point out. To sponsor Buddhist temples is their way to uphold this proud history, and in February 2010 some Buddhists at Prince of Songkla University in Pattani arranged for the region's first *wai phra gao wat* tour, a relatively modern trend adopted from the Bangkok middle class where people join an organised tour to visit nine important temples in order to make merit and at the same time support the temples. In Bangkok joining a tour is a matter of convenience for busy city people. In Pattani however, going together seems safer than travelling around on your own.

An obvious temple to visit for the tour and perhaps the most interesting example of interaction between local and state interests is Wat Chang Hai in Pattani's Khok Pho district, erected to commemorate the 16$^{th}$century monk Luang Pu Thuat. While the story of Luang Pu Thuat is intricately interwoven with miracles, myths, and legends, nevertheless, traces of Luang Pu Thuat is also found in a number of historical accounts around the region which today constitute southern Thailand and northern Malaysia. The famous monk is known through a number of legends for his powers to perform miracles, but as Jory has noted, there are few if any evidences which link Luang Pu Thuat to the present temple in Khok Pho.[14]

Wat Chang Hai, was erected in 1932, and was said to have been built on the remains of the old temple of Luang Pu Thuat. It was sponsored by the wealthy Sino-Thai Khananurak family from Pattani, a family who has also sponsored several other Thai Buddhist, as well as Chinese, temples and shrines. However, Jory who has questioned this link between Luang Pu Thuat and Wat Chang Hai, also suggests some interplay between the interests of the local Buddhist community and the Thai authorities on this matter and advocates that the political support for erecting the temple at that exact site in Pattani, was linked to the urgent need to legitimize Buddhism and the Thai state in the region.[15] This becomes evident with the intensified focus on Luang Pu Thuat through his amulets produced and popularized from 1954 by Ajarn Tim, the Abbot at Wat Chang Hai at the time. It is these amulets which more than anything has boosted the importance of Luang Pu Thuat and created the image of him as exceptionally *saksit* (sacred and powerful) and one of the most important monks in Thai Buddhism.

With this example of Wat Chang Hai we see how local perspectives and initiatives sometimes are supported, encouraged, and lifted up by national agendas to serve political interests. When a bomb exploded right outside the entrance of Wat Chang Hai already early in 2002, two years prior to the new wave of separatist insurgence had properly surfaced, although causing little harm, this was viewed as a major incident in the south as well as on the national level. The fact of the matter is that an attack on Wat Chang Hai, is not only considered as an attack on Buddhism and one of its most cherished landmarks, it is also comprehended as an attack on the Thai nation, as religion (i.e., Buddhism) constitutes one of the three pillars of what is regarded as Thai. The holy trinity in Thai modern history, Nation, Religion, and Monarchy (*chaat, sasana, phra mahakaset*) represents what is often referred to as Thainess (*khwam pen thai*), and is of great importance to the securing of Buddhism in the Patani region. Below, I will discuss the concept of Thainess and how this rationale of Buddhism and nationalism has developed. But before looking into the history of Buddhism in Thai nation-building it is of interest to touch briefly upon some new developments of this securing of Buddhism in the deep south of Thailand.

After submitting to the rule of the Siamese and later Thai kings, the Patani region has seen both state initiated and royal initiated support to the construction of temples, *stupa*s, and Buddha statues. Wat Chang Hai is already discussed, the giant Buddha image Phra Phuttha Thaksin Ming Mongkhon in Narathiwat, the largest outdoor Buddha image in all of southern Thailand could also be mentioned. This golden Buddha of steel-reinforced concrete completed in 1969 towers up 24 meters high and 17 meters wide in a 56.8-acre park in the midst of the Malay Muslim heartland.[16] The park also includes a shrine of King Thaksin. In Pattani's Sai Kao district another large Buddha image is raised on a mountain top overlooking the area.

In times of turmoil and unrest the securing of Buddhist institutions has been particularly important, and the same can be said about securing a Buddhist population, like the Self-help Land Settlement Project (*nikhom sang ton eng*) initiated by Sarit in 1961. The program which aimed to resettle poor landless farmers from the Northeast led to an increase of approximately 160,000 Thai Buddhists in the Patani region in only eight years, and was perceived by the locals as a deliberate attempt to decrease the local Malay Muslim domination.[17]

It is also interesting to see how older religious landmarks are used to legitimize the state. The 19th century temple Wat Chonthara Singhae, in Narathiwat's Tak Bai district at the bank of the river bordering Malaysia was one of Siam's strongest arguments when negotiating territory with their British counterparts. Today the temple is also commonly known as Wat Phitak Phaendin Thai, or the temple to protect Thai territory, and houses a small museum including full size wax figures resembling the signatory parties of the Anglo-Siamese treaty of 1909. The temple is one of many examples of how Buddhism and Thai legitimacy have been entwined in the region. Buddhism is used to secure Thai legitimacy. However, in the last decade these securing policies have escalated to increasingly also involve the security of the region.

## SECURING BUDDHISM IN THE DEEP SOUTH

While previously it was the pattern of assimilation that was directly challenged by separatist violence, during the latest insurgency, the policies of securing Buddhism have also been confronted. Buddhist monks and novices have been directly targeted in a handful of brutal attacks, some of which, as mentioned above, have been fatale. Buddhist villagers have also been attacked and threatened by leaflets with strong anti-Buddhist sentiments. The conflict is increasingly infused by religious rhetoric and the sense of being victims of an ethno-religious cleansing is emerging among Buddhist villagers in areas hardest hit by insurgency.[18]

This notion has again led to an increased focus on the security of Buddhism and Buddhist institutions. Wat Chang Hai had since the attack in 2002 soldiers guarding the temple, and most temples in the region are secured with barbed wire and sandbagged bunkers, regardless of whether there have been any violent incidents directed towards the temple in question. Soldiers are stationed at the temples providing 24-hour military protection. The vast majority of temples I visited in the Patani region were highly secured and the *wat* mentioned in the opening of this chapter was even partly turned into a military base, with a considerable higher number of soldiers than monks. It had become a military temple, and it is not the only one of its kind.[19]

The use of temples as lodging for military and police personnel in the Patani region is nothing uniquely new, as this was also the practice during

the Second World War. Moreover temple grounds were also used in the training of the Village Scouts of the Border Patrol Police in the 1970s.[20] However, with more than 60,000 troops[21] deployed in the three southern border provinces and several of them stationed at Buddhist temples, the dimension is rather significant in how the interaction between state violence and Buddhism is perceived. Monks I talked to all underlined that they never asked for the soldiers to come to their *wat*, however, most of them acknowledged the need to have soldiers protecting monks during their rounds for morning alms. Similarly they were deeply concerned about the future of Buddhism in the region and saw it as their duty to remain in their local community, particularly now when so many Buddhists had fled the region. One of the abbots I interviewed, originally from Phattalung province,[22] returned to the south and Pattani where he earlier had been living as a novice, after many years of monkshood in Bangkok. His sole motivation to come to Pattani, he told me, was to help encourage (*hai kamlang jai*) the Buddhist population and to secure a future for Buddhism in the south. Although highly pessimistic, believing Buddhism in the deep south of Thailand would suffer the same fate as it once did in Pakistan and Afghanistan, he wanted to do whatever he could to prevent Buddhism from getting eradicated.

To secure Buddhism in the south, the local population as well as people from other parts of Thailand are engaged in the ethnic conflict in the Patani region, and the abbot, although perhaps a little less well disposed towards his Malay Muslim neighbours than most other monks I met, also fall into this line. However, as both Jerryson and McCargo has documented, with their valuable findings through extensive fieldwork in the region, the well-intentioned support for southern Buddhists has taken a fundamental turn since the resurgence of the latest separatist rebellion.

As early as in 2002 there was evidence of soldiers taking paid leaves to ordain as monks in order to secure a sustainable representation of monks in the many Buddhist temples of the deep south, as these have had difficulties in recruiting enough monks to uphold the minimum of ritual practice, and moreover, according to McCargo, from 2004 this practice has been further encouraged by a program initiated by H.M. The Queen. While there in Thailand is nothing particularly controversial in letting government officials, including soldiers, take paid time off to temporarily ordain in the Sangha, this more or less systematic use of the practice in the south is more questionable. Additionally, Jerryson has found that some such military monks (*phra tahan*) are also operating secretively as protector of their *wat*, as soldiers. These are still armed, they continue to receive their military salaries, and at the same time they act as monks in the Buddhist Sangha.[23]

Naturally, the issue of this latter kind of military monks is highly controversial. There is no approval for this concept in the Sangha and their double identity seems to be concealed to their surroundings. Nonetheless, rumours spread and thus, the existence of military monks, alongside the

militarization of Buddhist temple grounds, as Jerryson notes, fuel a religious dimension to the ongoing ethno-nationalistic conflict in southern Thailand and increase the religious divide between Buddhists and Muslims.[24] As temples and monks appear to be mixed up in politics, Malay Muslims become more wary, and both Jerryson's and my own material suggests that Malay Muslims these days are more reluctant to get involved in activities at Buddhist temples than earlier.[25]

The concept of military temples, not to mention the saffron-robed soldiers, raise a number of profound questions related to Buddhist legitimacy, the state, and the use of violence. The main question which arises is perhaps how violence can be legitimized by Buddhists and Buddhist monks committed to the non-violent and peaceful teaching of the Buddha. The Thai example, however, is by no means unique in the Buddhist world where military interests, state power, violence, and Buddhism have been faithful companions throughout the history of most Buddhist societies.[26] The interesting question to ask, in the case of southern Thailand, is therefore not necessarily if and how these seemingly incompatible interests can be combined, but rather, what features, specific to Thai religious and political history, have been in motion to obtain the arguments that legitimize the current developments in the deep south. What can Thai history teach us, and what elements within this history have been decisive for the course set?

My argument is that the merging of what I will call Dhammaraja-Buddhism[27] into the concept of Thainess where the interests of the nation and the interests of Buddhism have become indistinguishable, in combination with a post-1932 nation-building and redefining of legitimate power with the resulting developments in the reciprocity between State and Sangha, can provide us with some key insights into the religio-political developments of recent years.

## DHAMMARAJA-BUDDHISM AND THE CONCEPT OF THAINESS IN PAST AND PRESENT

The *dhammarāja* is a well-known concept in Theravāda Buddhism. However, coined as an *-ism*, as done here with the term Dhammaraja-Buddhism, raises some problems. Dhammaraja-Buddhism may suggest something like a school or a sect within the Theravāda tradition. This however, is not my aim. I use it because I believe it says something qualitatively about the political reality in Theravāda societies, particularly in Thailand, which Theravāda philosophy as such does not cover, about the living religion and how the teaching of the Buddha, through the Theravāda doctrines, has become a mass religion.

The Theravāda Buddhist religion, as an historical tradition and belief system based on lived reality, not as philosophical ontology, has been structured around the dogma of Buddhist kingship, modelled on an archetypical image

of Emperor Ashoka the Great as the Dhammaraja, the righteous ruler and the protector of the teaching of the Buddha. The ruler is born a king due to his merits and moral virtuous, and is thus born with religious legitimacy. To uphold his legitimacy the king's power is dependent on his adherence to the Dhamma and the support of the Sangha therefore becomes one of the main royal undertakings. The Sangha provides the king with moral legitimacy and the king secures the support and protection of Buddhism and the Sangha in a closely tied interdependent and reciprocal relationship.

Although the religious and political spheres in Buddhist philosophy ideally are intended to operate detached from each other, in Thailand this has never been the case.[28] The relationship between king and Sangha has been inseparable within the system of Dhammaraja-Buddhism.[29] Religion thus was used by the king for political means at the same time as the Sangha acted as a mediator between the people and its ruler while maintaining a ritual and religious monopoly.[30] In the meeting with modernity and Western imperial powers from the 1850s to the early 1900s and with the emergence of nationalism and development of nation-states, the Southeast Asian sacral nature of government, what Tambiah called the galactic polity,[31] was challenged on an ideological basis, and the need to define Thai society and political life within a modern context became evident. It was within this context that the idea of a Thainess (*khwam pen thai*) took form.

While the first adaptations to modernity were introduced by King Mongkut (1851–1868) and King Chulalongkorn (1868–1910), the shaping of a national identity rooted in the three pillars of Nation, Religion, and Monarchy (*chat, sasana, phra mahakaset*) was initiated by their successor King Vajiravudh (1910–1925).[32] Vajiravudh managed to consolidate the Monarchy as a fundamental pillar of the modern Nation. However, a short time after his decease, the monarchy was challenged by an emerging political elite outside the royal circles and in 1932 this elite fronted a *coup d'état* abolishing the absolute monarchy. The 1932 revolution marked a fundamental shift in Thai history and a dramatic replacement and transfer of political power. And thus, the base for political legitimacy had to be redefined.

The redefiner of this political legitimacy and the main architect behind the construction of a modern Thai identity was Luang Wichit Wathakan, one of the most striking characters in the post-1932 Thai socio-political landscape.[33] In the period between 1932 and 1962 Wichit played a crucial role in consolidating the concept of the Thai nation as well as the concept of Thainess. Influenced by both Western historiography and ideas developed by King Vajiravudh, Wichit managed to conceptually link the dynastic era to the post-1932 nation-state, and in doing so construct an official conception of Thailand's past which remains to this day.[34] However, in contrast to Vaijravudh who projected the king as the sole guarantee for the existence of a Thai nation, Wichit placed the military into that role. As the King earlier had been the equivalent to the Nation, now, the military-dominated state and the Nation were conceptualized as one and the same.[35] Successfully

linking the Thai past to the changing social and political environment following the overthrow of the absolute monarchy, the king was exchanged with the military in the political conceptualization of legitimate power. And moreover, by keeping Religion and King as fundamental symbolic concepts of the Nation, whenever they were in need of it the military and the political elite could, to a certain degree, borrow moral legitimacy from the Sangha and the Dhammaraja.[36]

This crucial shift and its importance for the legitimacy of military power and state violence in 20th century Thailand is key in order to understand modern Thai political history. For centuries the symbiosis of King and Sangha had generated a solid moral legitimacy and by keeping Vajiravudh's holy trinity, securing that the King, although stripped for power,[37] remained the centre of unity, moral legitimacy through King and Religion was provided to the Nation. The monarchy had lost power, but its symbolic significance remained within the concept of Thainess. It should be noted however, that through the first decades of the reign of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the king with the help of his advisors, a network of princes and royalties, managed to reclaim large proportions of informal political power.[38]

As the Sangha earlier had embraced the righteous ruler, the Dhammaraja, it now embraced the Nation. In other words, this redefinition of political legitimacy helped pave the way for the changes Somboon have found since the 1950s leading up to a:

> "quite unique redefinition of roles for the monkhood and the reinterpretation of the teaching of the Buddha (Dhamma) for the achievement of political goals [ . . . ] a mobilization of Buddhism for political ends."[39]

Since the 1932 revolution the Sangha has, according to Somboon, not been able to exercise its influence over the political authorities, despite its esteem and prestige. Rather, the Thai Sangha has been loyal and subservient to political authorities in return for protection and patronage.[40] Although there in the 1960s and 1970s evolved a rather widespread political awakening within parts of the Sangha itself, with leftist or even socialist monk's movements as well as movements on the extreme right, the Sangha was clearly used by political authorities in their nationalist and nation-building agendas. One descriptive example is Khittivuddho Bhikkhu and his argument that killing communist was not a sin and would not generate demerit (*bap*).[41]

A number of government initiated projects involving the Sangha were instigated in the 1960s and 1970s, the *Thammathud* initiative perhaps being the best illustrative example.[42] The *Thammathud* program was set in hand to encourage national integration. With the use of travelling monks it intended to promote the central Thai language, the Buddhist religion, Thai morals and customs, and loyalty to the nation, as well as promoting understanding between the government and the rural population. The aim of the program was to prevent the spread of communism, but also to

suppress regionalism and feelings of local rather than national identity. At the sermons held in villages, for the most part in the North, Northeast and the South, the monks lectured on the Dhamma, but also included specific government policies on the duties of good citizenship and loyalty to the government, nation, and the king. Buddhist textbooks and medicine were distributed by the monks among the villagers on behalf of the government, and films about government development programs and royal projects were shown.[43] And as Tambiah notes, the monks involved did understand their role in the *Thammathud* program and its objective of reducing regional grievances, stemming communism, and mobilizing loyalty to the king and the nation, and by extension also the government, through the agency of religion. As one of the monks he interviewed states: "*Phra thammathud* work is encouraged because monks can approach the people better than government officials can."[44] Moreover, in a survey Tambiah did among 324 monk students at Mahachulalongkorn University on the role of monks in society, 45.6 per cent of the monks answered that they were in favour of participating in government programs of national and community development like the *Thammathud*.[45]

Through my interviews with monks in the Patani region I see many similarities with Tambiah's *Thammathud*-monks. The urge to assist lay people and help them with their everyday struggles, and their explanations of Thainess as essentially rooted in the Dhamma is highly emphasized. In conversations with monks they frequently use examples from Thai culture and what they will call the Thai way (*withi thai*) when explaining Dhamma in practice. For monks in the Patani region the interests of the Thai nation is also the interest of the Buddhist religion and the *Thammathud*-monks and the politically engaged monks from the 1960s and 1970 are in this sense predecessors to the monks' engagement in the troubled south today. There is a continuum going back through the 20th century via *Thammathud*-monks and the defining epoch of Thainess with Luang Wichit Wathakan in the forefront, back to the different stages of Dhammaraja-Buddhism in the Chakri, Ayutthaya, and Sukhothai era.

The acceptance for a certain extent of state violence is plausible within this rationale of Dhammaraja-Buddhism and the concept of Thainess, as the threat from separatist movements in the south, similarly to the threats of communism in the 1970s, is understood as a danger to Thai, and thus also Buddhist values. However, there is a giant leap from the rationale of wanting to protect and secure a certain set of values to permit soldiers to ordain as monks while continuing to serve as armed soldiers. Though, the recognition for this particular development is not at any rate accepted, neither by lay people nor the community of monks, this development is nevertheless a great threat to Buddhist legitimacy as the Buddhist religion and its Sangha are dependent on people's perception of their accomplishments as righteous and incorrupt. Although the general Thai Buddhist population appear to share the understanding of Buddhist and Thai values and

interests as being one, and also accept a certain use of state power and violence in the south to protect these values and interests, the existence of *phra tahan* (military monks), as well as an increase of military activities at Buddhist temples, can easily jeopardize the moral legitimacy and prestige of the Sangha in Thailand. And moreover, these developments do not help solve the increasing religious tension within the conflict in the south.

## CONCLUSION

To what is known the existence of *phra tahan*, with its shady and concealed nature, is unapproved of by the Sangha. It is also surrounded by a great deal of controversy. Nevertheless, the intimate relations between state and Sangha, legitimized by a rationale concerning a righteous rule adopted from Dhammaraja-ideology and redefined by the modern concept of Thainess, has helped to pave the way to the militarization of Buddhist temples, through an argument of protecting Nation, Religion, and Monarchy, and at the next level opened up for extreme practices like that of the *phra tahan*. The course taken in the first half of the 20th century, leading up to the politicization of Thai Buddhism to serve the interests of the nation has provided a standard for political involvement in the religious sphere which is reactivated by the current conflict in southern Thailand. Despite the long-lasting and ongoing effort to include the Malay Muslim population into the Thai nation, endeavouring religious freedom and latitude for Muslims, the militarization and politicization of the Buddhist sphere in the south instead causes increased mistrust and leads to an extended alienation of the Malay Muslim population, and thus, ironically, is contributing to greater division rather than national unity in Thailand.

## NOTES

1. Data for this chapter was collected during fieldwork executed in October 2007, from March to May 2008, and during February 2010. Fieldwork was carried out in all three provinces of the Patani region, however mainly in Pattani province.
2. I use the term ‘Patani region’ primarily when referring to the provinces Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, the main area of modern day Thailand which historically constituted the Kingdom of Patani. The four southern districts of Songkla—Chana, Na Thawi, Thepa, and Saba Yoi—are also implied in this term. The term ‘Pattani’ is used when referring to the modern Thai province or its provincial city. The terms ‘Patani’ and ‘Pattani’ refer to Malay and Thai spelling/pronunciation respectively, and can in certain contexts be perceived politically. However, throughout this thesis the use of ‘Patani’ versus ‘Pattani’ will purely serve the purpose of distinguishing geographical areas and different historical epochs discussed. ‘The deep south’ and ‘southern Thailand’ are if not specified differently, used as reference to the same area—the Patani region.

3. Although the exact dating remains to be adequately proven, the Patani kingdom is said to have been declared an Islamic state in 1457. Wan Kadir Che Man *Muslim Seperatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand* (Singapore, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 34; David K. Wyatt "Introduction" in *Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani*, by Ibrahim Syukri, (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2005) ix. However, the kingdom of Patani may have existed since the fourteenth century. Refer to G. Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1968) for earlier accounts of the Patani kingdom, as well as the kingdom of P'an P'an, and to Paul M. Munoz, *Early Kingdoms of the Indonesian Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula* (Singapore: Didier Millet, 2006) for accounts on the Srivijaya Empire.
4. David K. Wyatt "Introduction" in *Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani*, by Ibrahim Syukri, (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2005) ix. Chuleeporn Virunha "Historical Perceptions of Local Identity in the Upper Peninsula", in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, Montesano, M. J. and Jory, P. (ed.), (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008). Refer to G. Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1968) for more accounts on the kingdom of Lankasuka.
5. Refer to *Hikayat Patani* and *Serjarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani* and the discussion on these works by Teeuw and Wyatt for more on the history of the Patani kingdom.
6. Davisakd Puaksom, "Of a Lesser Brilliance: Patani Historiography in Contention," in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, ed. M.J. Montesano, and P. Jory (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 73 pp.
7. *Overcoming Violence through the Power of Reconciliation*, Report of the National Reconciliation Commission (2006), 44 p.
8. Srisompob Jitpiromsri and D. McCargo, "The Southern Thai Conflict Six Years On: Insurgency, Not Just Crime" in *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 156–183, (ISEAS, 2010) 157. The statistics used here are collected from the data base of the non-governmental organisation Deep South Watch (DSW) connected to Prince of Songkla University in Pattani. DSW have a broad network of local informants reporting all violent incidents in the region and data are later systematised by the organisation. Note that it is a challenge to distinguish between insurgency related violence and political or crime related violence.
9. Refer to Mark Askew, "The Killing Fields of the Deep South: A Deadly Mix," *Bangkok Post* August 9, 2009, for a discussion on insurgency violence and political and smuggling related violence.
10. Refer to the report by International Crisis Group *Thailand's Emergency Decree: No Solution*, Asia report No 105, November 18, 2005, for a discussion on the effects of this decree.
11. Refer to the report by International Crisis Group *Southern Thailand: The Problem with Paramilitaries*, Asia report No 140 23rd October, 2007, for a discussion on paramilitary groups.
12. G. Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1968), 52; Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, Cambridge (New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 144.
13. David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2003), 40.

14. Patrick Jory, "Luang Pho Thuat and the Integration of Pattani" in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, ed. M.J. Montesano and P. Jory (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 296 p.
15. Patrick Jory, "Luang Pho Thuat and the Integration of Pattani" in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, (ed.) M.J. Montesano and P. Jory (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 303.
16. Tourism Authority of Thailand.
17. Suhrke, Astri "Loyalists and Separatists: The Muslims in Southern Thailand" Asian Survey, Vol.17, No. 3 (1977). 241, International Crisis Group, *Southern Thailand: Insurgency, not Jihad*, Asia report No 98 18th May 2005, p 10.
18. While the number of casualties among the Malay Muslim population outnumbers the casualties among Thai Buddhists, Thai Buddhists, as they constitute a much smaller percentage of the total population in the deep south, nonetheless feel persecuted as religious group.
19. It should be noted that I registered a slight decrease in military presence in some Pattani temples from 2008 to 2010. Wat Chang Hai for instance had no longer visible armed personnel at the premises, and a couple of other temples I revisited had loosened up on the security. In 2010 there appeared to be a stronger military presence at temples in Yala and Narathiwat.
20. Michael Jerryson, "Appropriating a space for violence: State Buddhism in southern Thailand" in *Journal of Asian Studies* 40:1, 33–57 (February 2009): 38.
21. Srisompob Jitpiromsri. "Five years, five months: analysis of the 65 months of unrest in the southern border provinces," Centre for the Study of Conflict and Cultural Diversity (CSCC), PSU. http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/369, 2009.
22. A southern Thai Province just north of the Patani region.
23. Michael Jerryson, "Appropriating a space for violence: State Buddhism in southern Thailand," 45 pp; Duncan McCargo, "The Politics of Buddhist identity in Thailand's deep south: The Demise of civil religion?" in *Journal of Asian Studies* 40:1, 11–32 (February 2009):24.
24. Michael Jerryson, "Appropriating a space for violence: State Buddhism in southern Thailand," 33, 57.
25. Michael Jerryson, "Appropriating a space for violence: State Buddhism in southern Thailand," 34. It should be noted that the increased diversity of religious orientation within the Muslim community, as discussed by McCargo, Duncan, *Tearing Apart the Land: Islam and Legitimacy in Southern Thailand* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), Chap. 1, may also provide some explanation to this new trend.
26. Refer to Michael Jerryson and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Buddhist Warfare* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) for accounts of war and violence through history and across the Buddhist world.
27. Somboon Suksamran. *Buddhism and Politics in Thailand: A Study of political Activism and Involvement of the Thai Sangha* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1982), 159.
28. The Brahman concept of the Devaraja, the divine king, has also been significantly prominent both under the Ayutthaya and the currant Chakri dynasty. However, this concept has acted as supplement to Dhammaraja-Buddhism. The king as a Bodhisattva to come, also prominent in Thai history, is yet another concept which unites the qualities of both the Devaraja and the Dhammaraja.
29. Refer to Stanley J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1976) and

Somboon Suksaram, *Buddhism and Political Legitimacy*, Chulalongkorn University Research Report Series No. 2 (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1993) for a thorough discussion on kingship, power, and Buddhism in Thai history.

30. Stanley J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*, Chap. 7.
31. Refer to Walter F. Vella, *Chaiyo!: King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978) for a discussion on King Vajiravudh and the development of Thai nationalism.
32. See Scot Barmé, *Luang Wichit Wathakan and the Creation of a Thai Identity* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1993) and Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 126, for more on Luang Wichit's impact on Thai modern history.
33. Scot Barmé, *Luang Wichit Wathakan and the Creation of a Thai Identity*, 4, 181.
34. Scot Barmé, *Luang Wichit Wathakan and the Creation of a Thai Identity*,181.
35. Refer to Suwanna Satha-Anand's chapter in this book for more on how Thai Buddhism has justified the use of violence in Thai political history.
36. Refer to Paul M. Handley *The King Never Smiles: A Biograaphy of Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2006) for a thorough account of the political significance of King Bhumibol's reign.
37. Somboon Suksaram. *Buddhism and Political Legitimacy*, Chulalongkorn University Research Report Series No. 2 (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1993), 7 p.
38. Somboon Suksaram. *Buddhism and Political Legitimacy*, 63.
39. Refer to Charles F. Keyes, "Political Crisis and Militant Buddhism in Contemporary Thailand" in *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos, and Burma*, (ed.) B.L. Smith (Chambersburg, PA: ANIMA Books, 1978) for a discussion on Khittivuddho Bhikkhu and Militant Buddhism in Thailand in the 1970s.
40. Thammathud is derived from the Pāli term *dhammaduta* meaning "ambassador of the Dhamma."
41. Somboon Suksaram. *Buddhism and Political Legitimacy*, Chulalongkorn University Research Report Series No. 2 (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1993), 62; Stanley J Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*, 434.
42. Stanley J Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 439.
43. Stanley J. Tambiah, "Sangha and Polity in Modern Thailand: An Overview" in *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos, and Burma*, (ed.) B.L. Smith (Chambersburg, PA: ANIMA Books, 1978), 131.

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# 3 Reconsidering the Historiography of Modern Korean Buddhism

## Nationalism and Identity of the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism

*Cho Sungtaek*

## INTRODUCTION

The historiography of Korean Buddhism in the early twentieth century and colonial period has primarily been a nationalist narrative in which anti-Japanese sentiments and 'Korean Buddhist identity through the protection of tradition' have played a central role in the writing of the history of modern Korean Buddhism. The narrative can be outlined as follows: in response to the threat posed by Japanese Buddhism on the Korean Peninsula, a national, anti-colonial Buddhism emerged and continued under colonial circumstances. Following liberation from Japanese colonial rule, under a campaign of purifying a Buddhist order considered tainted by the colonial legacy, Korean Buddhists expelled married monks. In 1962, the Chogye Order, a successor to the long tradition of Korean Buddhism, was reestablished.[1] The issues with such a narrative can be summarized through the following three points:

(1) First, it considers the formative process of anti-colonial national Buddhism to be the history of modern Korean Buddhism, and the establishment of the Chogye Order as its culmination. As to the teleology of a historical interpretation that has conflated the entire history of Korean Buddhism since the dawn of the twentieth century with the establishment of the Chogye Order, I have already argued in other publications.[2] In addition, Prof. Micah Auerback has recently criticized the writing of the history of modern Korean Buddhism as falling into presentism. He argues:

> Another problem related to the presentist fallacy is its rigid teleology, which posits that our present is the only possible outcome of the past.
> The affirmation of a single ideal present is complicit with other affirmations, of a totalizing, monolithic Korean identity, of a single legitimate form of Buddhist practice.[3]

(2) The second problem is the rigid anti-/pro-Japanese dichotomy in which modern Japanese Buddhism is considered 'corrupted,' 'degraded,' and

'evil,' while Korean Buddhism of the time is 'feeble' but pure due to its long suppression by Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and victimization by the Japanese. This perception, bearing no semblance to any historical reality, is simply a bias derived from a victim's point of view. Whether conscious or not, Korean Buddhism sustains its defense of the political legitimacy of the Chogye Order and its historical identity by obscuring the complexity of the history of modern Korean Buddhism.

(3) The third point I would like to mention is that in this narrative 'modern Buddhism' is not distinguished from Buddhism in the modern period. With the establishment of the Chogye Order being described as the completion of modern Korean Buddhism, little heed is given to the assorted endeavors toward the modernization of Korean Buddhism made during the colonial period, thereby completely overlooking legitimate evaluations of the period. On the point of 'modern Buddhism,' the Chogye Order, which purports to 'restore the tradition'—doctrinally as well as institutionally—is far from being 'modern Buddhism.' The Chogye Order is a result of the previous process of 'reformation' or 'modernization' of Korean Buddhism, which has been a fundamental ongoing task since early in the twentieth century. Moreover, the Chogye Order crafted the image of national Buddhism in order to expel married monks (then comprising the bulk of the monastic population), and later appropriated the rhetoric of national Buddhism as was seen fit.

(4) The time has come for a new narrative of the history of modern Korean Buddhism, rather than simply a nationalist narrative. In an attempt to transcend the binary conception of 'anti-/pro-Japanese' and the presentist fallacy that are legitimizing the current Buddhist order in Korea, in this chapter I would like to suggest an innovative perspective for viewing modern Korean Buddhism and the diverse experiences of Korean Buddhists as 'dilemmas.' In doing so, I think we can address a range of aspects which cannot be simply reduced to an 'anti-/pro- Japanese' viewpoint and critically reexamine the historical meaning of the establishment of the Chogye Order in modern Korea.

## KOREAN BUDDHISM IN DILEMMAS

Early modern Korean Buddhism was, in a phrase, 'Buddhism in dilemma.' The full picture of the diverse aspects of Korean Buddhism spawned in response to dilemmas is the history of modern Korean Buddhism. The origin of these dilemmas, which Korean Buddhism was required to endure starting in the early twentieth century and, subsequently, throughout the colonial period, pivots on two facts: one is the fact that a primary religion of the colonizer, Japan, was Buddhism; the other is that the Buddhism of Japan was seen as more 'advanced' compared to Korean Buddhism which

had, over five hundred years of suppression, grown debilitated. By observing modern Korean Buddhism from the perspective of 'dilemma,' it can be seen that the relationship of Korean Buddhism to Japan was neither 'anti-Japanese' or 'pro-Japanese;' rather we see Korean Buddhism facing two kinds of dilemma: one is that stemming from the way in which Korean Buddhism related itself with Japanese Buddhism, and the second drawn from the ambivalence of the self-proclaimed enlightenment nationalist intellectuals toward Korean Buddhism. I would like to discuss these two aspects of dilemmas in turn.

## Modernization or Korean Selfhood

It was not until 1895 that Korean Buddhists, enabled by Japanese Buddhism, were officially allowed to propagate their religion in the Korean capital. Initially, Japanese Buddhism was a sort of a 'liberation army' to Korean Buddhists. Before the ascendancy of nationalism through anti-Japanese sentiment, it should not be surprising that Korean Buddhists mostly held favorable impressions of Japanese Buddhism. Due to its impact on Korean society, Christianity posed a great challenge to Korean Buddhism, and Korean Buddhists considered Japanese Buddhism to be a favorable form of protection from this powerful religion from the West.

Korean Buddhists knew well that after five hundred long years of suppression the 'modernization of Buddhism' was the only possible option. It was considered too distant and anachronistic to return to the past golden eras of Korean Buddhism of Silla or Koryŏ. Moreover, 'entering into modern society' and 'attaining civilization and enlightenment' (*munmyŏng kaehwa*) were common aspirations of the Korean people facing loss of nationhood. In concert with such aspirations within Korean society, Korean Buddhists took 'modernization' as one of the paramount tasks to be undertaken in 'modern society.' It was of utmost importance for Korean Buddhists to demonstrate to themselves that Buddhism, a traditional religion, held modern utility and was useful enough to survive in the new environment of modern society. Accordingly, they defined their religion as a 'philosophy' in order to establish Buddhism as 'scientific and rational,' two key characteristics of modernity. They were not reluctant to incorporate modern academic disciplines, such as biology, physics, geography, religious studies, history, and others into new curricula for training monks and nuns. Inspired by the social work of Christianity, as well as Japanese Buddhism in Korea, Korean Buddhists similarly became actively engaged in modern social service provision, such as supporting hospitals, prison propagations, and so forth, all of which endeavors demonstrate the utility and social viability of Buddhism in modern society. In the attempt to achieve modernization, there were, at times, radical proposals that denied even their ancient proprietary Buddhist traditions. In this regard, it might be mention that clerical marriage and the abolishment of chanting halls as proposed by Manhae Han

Yong'un (1879–1944) were some of the most radical proposals of all. While being prepared to deny their own traditions, Korean Buddhists viewed with optimism their efforts to adapt themselves to a rapidly changing society. To a Korean Buddhist, a latecomer to the modern world, both Japanese Buddhism and Christianity were considered rivals as well as challenges to overcome. At the same time, however, in terms of social viability and modern utility, they were models to be followed.

While engaging in a range of efforts to modernize Korean Buddhism, Korean Buddhists were confronted with a further task: to secure an identity of Korean Buddhism distinct from that of the Japanese tradition. Japanese Buddhism, after systematic suppression by the Meiji government during in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, had been transformed into a 'national Buddhism' or 'state Buddhism:' a Buddhism demanding loyalty to the Emperor, being beneficial to the state, and being committed to the national ideology. After the 1919 experience of the March First Movement and the inevitable conflicts that arise between the colonizer and the colonized, Korean Buddhists recognized that sustaining an identity as distinct from Japanese Buddhism was as equally important as the modernization of Korean Buddhism.

From that point on, the twin tasks of modern Korean Buddhism, the modernization of Korean Buddhism and establishment of a distinct identity, were perceived to be in contradiction or dilemma. To follow Japanese Buddhism—perceived to be an advanced model of modern Buddhism at the time—Koreans sacrificed the self-identity of Korean Buddhism. On the other hand, however, the attempt to emphasize the identity of Korean Buddhism led to difficulties in maintaining social utility in the new era. Hence, these dual tasks of 'modernization' and 'self-identity' were placed in a contradictory relationship. Efforts to compromise and harmonize the two efforts existed in practice, but they lacked the needed internal drive and concrete direction to grow into a persistent movement.

From today's perspective, we may be able to envision a model for Korean Buddhism that can remain distinct from Japanese Buddhism while still pursuing the modernization of Korean Buddhism. However, within the marginalized situation in which Korean Buddhism found itself at the time, I believe it would have been nearly impossible to imagine a 'third model.' After five hundred years of suppression, the available financial and human resources were far from sufficient. The decisive factor was, however, the simple fact that the religion of the colonizer, Japan, was Buddhism.

As in the case of the European colonies, where the religion of the colonized differed from that of the colonizer, the traditional religion of the colonized could be central in engendering national resistance and establishing a new national discourse against the colonizer. In the case of Korea, however, Christianity, a religion foreign to East Asia, played such a role. Since Christianity was placed under the restraints of a furtively anti-Christian policy of the colonial government, it found itself in a position to be easily identifiable

with the Korean people similarly suffering unjust Japanese colonial rule. With this sympathetic perception by the Korean people, Christianity was able to become a 'national religion' of Korea and the locus of creating a national discourse. While scholars in the field of modern Korean Buddhism postulate without reservations Japanese Buddhism as the primary 'other' to Korean Buddhism, this may not have been the case for those Korean Buddhists who were actually faced with the dilemma.

Undergoing a crisis in the early twentieth century, Korean intellectuals began to contemplate a conception of a 'nation' that was not based on the state, but rather on ethnicity. History, religion, and language became important elements in their contemplation for constructing the 'nation' and national identity. 'Civilization and enlightenment' (*munmyŏng kaewha*) and 'nationalism' can be seen as contradictory, just as the two Buddhist agendas of 'modernization' and 'Korean identity' conflict with one other. As Prof. Andre Schmid (Toronto University) persuasively demonstrates, however, Korean intellectuals accordingly appropriated 'civilization and enlightenment' (*munmyŏng kaewha*) and 'nationalism' into *a single* discourse in the early twentieth century.[4] In other words, all that is useful is good for Korea in the name of 'civilization and enlightenment' (*munmyŏng kaewha*). In the case of Christianity, for example, despite its foreign roots, it could be beneficial to the Korean people in the name of 'civilization and enlightenment' (*munmyŏng kaewha*); if beneficial to the Korean people, it could then be a fitting religion for them. To this way of thinking, it was not unnatural to give consideration to Christianity as a national religion for Koreans. Christianity, since the beginning of the twentieth century, was equated with civilization and modern education, including education for women, and occupied a central space in creating a national discourse. During and after the early modern period, it was even considered possibly the only potential counter to help escape from the fetters of Japanese colonial rule. That Christianity was distinct from the religion of the colonizer and was also under colonial restraints enabled a favorable prospect for Christianity as a national religion for the Korean people.

This was not the case with Korean Buddhism, however. One of the religions of Japan, the colonizer, was Buddhism, and Japanese Buddhism was viewed as the most successful model for modern Buddhism in Asia at that time: lay Buddhist intellectuals played an integral role in Buddhism; Buddhism was taught amidst the modern academic disciplines in colleges and universities; social work, in a modern sense, also became an important component of religious propagation, the methods and contents of which were completely different from traditional Buddhism. If not impossible, it was clearly not a simple matter for Korean Buddhists to separate the modernization of Korean Buddhism from Japanese Buddhism and conflate the modernization of Korean Buddhism with nationalism, since modern Buddhism was introduced vis-à-vis Japanese Buddhism.

Due to this dilemmatic situation, clerical marriage emerged as a pivotal issue for modern Korean Buddhism. Some Korean monks considered clerical marriage to be a fundamental component of Japanese Buddhism, while others viewed it as merely a feature of modern Buddhism and not necessarily a Japanese trait. The former believed that with simply the elimination of clerical marriage from Japanese Buddhism, it could be taken as a model reference for modern Korean Buddhism and consequently distinguish modern Buddhism from Japanese Buddhism. This was the case with conservative reformers such as Paek Yongsŏng (1863–1940) and Paek Hakmyŏng (1878–1944). While they viewed clerical marriage exclusively in a negative light, they were not exactly reluctant to accept certain of the then-current traits of Japanese Buddhism, such as modern education for monks, the urban dissemination of Buddhism, and the importance of lay Buddhist intellectuals. Meanwhile, some of those who took a more flexible stance on clerical marriage considered it to be indispensable for the modernization of Korean Buddhism and not necessarily harmful to the identity of Korean Buddhism. Manhae Han Yong'un, a well-known progressive reformer of modern Korean Buddhism, is an example. For Manhae, the main issue with Japanese Buddhism was its position as a state religion,[5] and he believed that in order to secure an identity for Korean Buddhism it was more important to be free from colonial rule. This explains why he continued to advocate separation of politics and religion (or the separation of church and state) in his writings.[6] His notion of 'people's Buddhism' (*minjung pulgyo*) or the 'multitude/public Buddhism' was, in my opinion, on the one hand intended to safeguard Buddhism from nationalism in a narrow sense, and on the other to forge traditional, monk-centered Buddhism into a popular Buddhism, which in fact meant the embrace of clerical marriage. This was, he considered, a manner for modernizing Korean Buddhism while securing the identity of Korean Buddhism. Not perceiving clerical marriage as an essentially Japanese Buddhist trait, Manhae believed that through freedom from colonial control the identity of Korean Buddhism could be secured, and with a new system of clerical marriage, the modern utility of Korean Buddhism could be achieved. However astute this proposal was, even seen from today's viewpoint, clerical marriage was determined to be an essentially Japanese element of Buddhism, and failed to gain general consensus among Korean Buddhists. 'Modernization' and 'Korean identity' were, throughout the history of modern Korean Buddhism, considered to be incompatible and contradictory.

While this dilemma continued, Korean Buddhism faced a further adversity: the general mobilization efforts for the Sino-Japanese war that began in 1937. From that point on, so-called 'pro-Japanese' or 'anti-Japanese' positions came to be significant issues for modern Korean Buddhism in terms of providing support for or collaborating with the Japanese war campaign. Under this general mobilization, Korean Buddhists incessantly agonized over 'modernization' and 'Korean identity,' and suffered under the

brutality of the Japanese military system until the liberation from colonial rule in 1945.

## "The Brighter Past and the Dismal Present"[7]

The dilemmatic experience of modern Korean Buddhism did not originate solely in its relationship with Japanese Buddhism and Japanese colonial rule. Korean Buddhists were faced with a complex situation that was a result, in a way, of the ambivalent views of Korean Buddhism toward the self-proclaimed nationalist enlightenment intellectuals. At the time of the of 'national sovereignty crisis' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Korean intellectuals began to contemplate a 'nation' based not on the state but on ethnicity. To their thinking, history, religion, and language became the paramount factors in engendering the national identity. Through this ideation process, Tan'gun, Koreans' legendary progenitor, emerged as a new symbolic icon for the reconstruction of a cultural identity based on Korean ethnicity. By reifying the Tan'gun narrative together with 'civilization and enlightenment'(*munmyŏng kaehwa*), Korean intellectuals—especially reformers with Confucian background such as Tanjae Shin Ch'aeho (1880–1936)—attempted to extricate Korea's history from the Chinese cultural legacy and decentralize the 'Middle Kingdom'. In the crafting of a 'new' national history, Korean Buddhism, having enjoyed deep, enduring ties with Chinese Buddhism, was considered to be a foreign religion, and was omitted from the various disciplines of *Chosŏnhak* (Korean Studies) intended for researching the cultural identity of Korea. Here Korean Buddhism, recently emerging from a long period of depression, was once again marginalized in the name of the 'nation.' Not only did this stem from the perennial bias against Buddhism held by the Confucian-educated reformers, who emerged as a new intellectual group along with the Westernized and Christian groups, but the very fact that a religion of Japan was Buddhism also had a negative impact on outlooks on Buddhism.

One newspaper article illustrates the then-current Korean intellectual critical standpoint toward Buddhism. Here is the summary of their argument as it appears in the article.[8] For the convenience of reading, section numbers are inserted in each statement.

(1) Although there exist a few monks, aware of the current trends and thoughts, who are committed to educating monks, upon examination, however, those who teach juniors the principles advocated by Masters Sŏsan (1520–1604) and Samyŏng (1544–1610) of saving the nation number very few. Most of these make a living, following the tide of our times, by translating for Japanese monks. This is a disgrace for [Korean] monks.

(2) There are a few monks who, in order to establish the religious legitimacy [of Korean Buddhist tradition], convene and organize a society

for Buddhist studies. However, unlike Japanese monks, there are no Korean monks who possess an extensive knowledge of Eastern and Western philosophy and of the past and present with which to make innovative new contributions to (Korean) Buddhism. This is also a disgrace for [Korean] monks.

(3) There are no monks who actively oppose the propagations of Japanese monks, but there are many monks who ask Japanese monks to preach Dharma. This is also a disgrace to [Korean] monks.

(4) You, Korean Monks, should stand resolutely. First, you should not forget the 'Spirit of Universal Salvation' of Buddhism; second, you should not forget the 'Spirit of Nationalism,' which has long been a feature of Korean Buddhism; third, you should import the knowledge of the new world[9], and should not give in to the activities of foreign monks in every endeavor, but should move forward.

Those who, while staying at a monastery deep in the mountains savor the taste of meditation alone and want only for themselves to dwell in heavenly paradise, will fall into hell sooner or later, as this is not what the Buddha allows us.

It is interesting that the 'Monks' Army' was singled out as a historical example of a Buddhist contribution to the nation. Since the 'Monks' Army' of Sŏsan and Samyŏng was organized for the war campaign to resist the Japanese invasion of 1592, it appears to have been deliberately selected as a symbol of national defense against Japan. Though further research is required, as far as I am aware this article appears to be the first document mentioning the 'Monks' Army' as a Buddhist contribution to the nation. If this is the case, the tradition of 'state-protection Buddhism' (*hoguk pulgyo*) could not have been a forgery created by Korean Buddhism circles, but may have in fact been imposed from outside Buddhist society during the crisis of loss of national sovereignty. Whichever may have been the case, further investigation is required.

Buddhist calls for patriotism (or nationalism) and 'civilization and enlightenment' (*munmyŏng kaehwa*)—issues raised in Korean society since the late nineteenth century—continued to appear in journals and newspapers. Korean Buddhists not yet keen on the significance of patriotism (or nationalism) to Buddhism, maintained as part of their attempts to respond to social demands in mission statements the social responsibilities of Buddhism; they invoked the 'patriotic spirit of Buddhism' or the Buddhist contribution to a 'wealthy country and its powerful people.' In addition, a Buddhist sense of patriotism and nationalism appeared in the 'Korean Buddhist Declaration of Independence,' proclaimed in Shanghai in December of 1919 immediately following the March First Movement. Kim Kwangshik understood the 'Korean Buddhist Declaration of Independence,' the historical foundation of anti-Japanese national Buddhism, to be the essence of modern Korean Buddhism. While it may be true that

patriotism and anti-Japanese nationalism are indeed expressed through the 'Korean Buddhist Declaration of Independence,' it is my argument, however, that this was simply a response to a society-wide cry for patriotism; there was no elaboration based on Buddhist doctrine or the Buddhist spirit. In other words, while Korean Buddhist society was aware of the national demand for patriotism (or nationalism) and 'civilization and enlightenment' (*munmyŏng kaehwa*) and were eager to respond accordingly, it must be noted that Korean Buddhism, placed in the difficult situation of the colonizer's religion also being Buddhism, may have been offering no more than a declaration, simply what they *thought* they should do.

Meanwhile, Korean intellectuals' understanding of and demands on Korean Buddhism were not necessarily always in accord. While some longed for Korean Buddhism to be 'modernized,' others desired, implicitly or explicitly, for Korean Buddhism to remain as a tradition, a symbol of a 'brighter past.' While it is true that the stance on Buddhism as part of tradition was not inherently in conflict with modernization, there was definitely hesitancy towards modernization. Ch'oe Namsŏn's (1890–1957) ambivalent views and attitudes towards Buddhism are manifest.

Ch'oe Namsŏn authored an article in which he recounts his encounter with Buddhism:[10]

> At the age of fifteen, when I went to Japan [for studying], I began to read works of Western philosophy one after another, and came to learn that Buddhism was philosophical. Previously, I had believed that Buddhism was a reclusive mountain religion. However, I came to observe the religious atmosphere of Japan and learned that Buddhism there was active in worldly affairs and cultural interactions. After that, my interest in Buddhism increased substantively.
>
> I had already read some books, published in Shanghai, on Buddhist doctrines and philosophy, books which had been translated from Western languages into Chinese. However, due to the limited Western understanding of Buddhism, there was mention of an inertia and lack of concern with the affairs of the world as one shortcoming of Buddhism. Since then, I had felt sorry about that until I saw in Japan that Buddhism was not necessarily isolated and apart from the world. This made me glad, and I was also very deeply moved by the [Japanese] scholars active around the time, scholars who stressed that Buddhism was philosophical. At that time, I felt reassured that Buddhism was no less philosophical or theoretical than Western philosophy.

The "age of fifteen," in the story refers to the year 1906 when Ch'oe Namsŏn went to Waseda University. At first glance, it simply appears that Ch'oe Namsŏn is recounting changes in his view on Buddhism. In the subtext of the story, however, Korean and Japanese Buddhism of the early twentieth century are, in fact, compared. His views of Buddhism as being

"a reclusive mountain religion," "inert" and suffering a "lack of concern with affairs of the world" is in fact his reflection upon Korean Buddhism, while the Buddhism which deeply moved him was Japanese Buddhism. It was through the Buddhism in Japan, not in Korea, that he came to realize that Buddhism had a philosophical system comparable to Western thought, and that it could play an important cultural role in a modern society. His experiences and observations in Japan regarding the potential of Buddhism in a modern society generated a renewed interest in Korean Buddhism and its function in Korean society, but they also provided a basis from which to criticize existing Korean Buddhism.

Upon his return from Japan, he helped the Buddhist intellectuals Yi Nŭnghwa (1869–1943) and Kwŏn Sangno (1879–1965) to publish their books, *Chosŏn Pulgyo T'ongsa* (*The Comprehensive History of Korean Buddhism*) and *Chosŏn Pulgyo Yaksa* (*A Brief History of Korean Buddhism*), respectively, through his own publishing company, Sinmun'gwan. Furthermore, he encouraged the systematization of Korean Buddhism through the techniques of modern Buddhist scholarship. He was himself committed to researching Buddhism as a central aspect of Korean culture. Ch'oe maintains that research into Buddhism was a prerequisite for understanding Korean culture and establishing a Korean identity:[11]

> Now I came to the realization that without an understanding of Buddhism, we are not able to understand Korean culture. Furthermore, since the narrative of Tan'gun, the Founding Father, was transmitted through Buddhist literature, in which [without knowledge of Buddhism] various questions and problems would occur, in order to know the correct answer I knew I had to study Buddhism prior to anything else.

Here Ch'oe recognizes Korean Buddhism as an important component of Korean culture. While acknowledging the traditional value of Korean Buddhism, however, he devalues the contemporary Korean Buddhism of his time. It must have been inevitable for him to compare 'inert' Korean Buddhism with the modern Japanese Buddhism that he had observed as being "very active in worldly affairs and cultural interactions" and comparable to the Western philosophical system. In the following way, he criticized Korean Buddhism as unable to make headway in creating a 'new culture' (*sinmunhwa*) for Korea:

> Up to now it has been more than true that Korean culture has been indebted to Buddhism. We cannot but view Buddhism as the first among thoughts of foreign origin, which had engendered cultural progress to us in a real sense.
>
> Korean culture's expectations of Buddhism in the present and future is no less, if not more than, in the past. However, how much can we really ask of the Korean Buddhists and Korean Buddhism of today? How

> much can their sloping shoulders and slackened arms assume such burdens and responsibility in the process of building our '*new culture*'? At a time when we could say, alas *"here comes the time and opportunity that the entire world could become a Buddhist world,"* the reason for that it is none other than the Buddhists themselves, who have dragged Buddhism into the miserable dumps? It is very sad that there is no one else to blame for this, but only the Korean Buddhists of today.
>
> It is, in fact, neither accidental nor casual that, amongst the entire Buddhist world, Korean Buddhism was able to enjoy a position of prestige and eminent value in terms of doctrine, and that since Buddhism was introduced into Korean culture, all of Korea has become a Buddhist culture.[12]

In this article, the statement "here comes the time and opportunity that the entire world could become a Buddhist world" reflects Ch'oe's impressions of and observations over Japanese Buddhism. If Korean Buddhism is compared with this standard of Japanese Buddhism, Ch'oe Namsŏn's statement on Korean Buddhism, "sloping shoulders and slackened arms" would be an accurate observation on Korean Buddhism of that time. It was not, however, a just evaluation of Korean Buddhism. Having recently emerged from five hundred years of stagnation, Korean Buddhism was, despite its long tradition on the Korean Peninsula, in fact, a new religion in terms of its religious, financial, and institutional influence within Korean society. Just as it would be unreasonable to compare the religious and social influence of Korean Christianity in the early twentieth century with that of contemporaneous Christianity in Western nations, it would not be fair to compare Korean and Japanese Buddhisms. In fact, as early as the 1920s Christianity surpassed Korean Buddhism in terms of number of registered followers, as well as in the count of schools, hospitals, and other institutions of social service. What Korean Buddhists were in need of may not have been criticism or reprimands regarding its current stagnation, but rather encouragement and moral support. Instead, Korean intellectuals relentlessly chastised Korean Buddhism. This may have been because Korean Buddhism was among the primary sources for the inferiority complex suffered by Korean intellectuals. Here again we see how the fact that a religion of Japan was Buddhism played out and functioned in Korean society and in its interaction with Korean Buddhism.

In this light, it would be understandable that in the article, while mentioning "among the entire Buddhist world Korean Buddhism enjoyed the position of prestige and excellent value," Ch'oe Namsŏn turned his attention from Korean Buddhism to the traditional Buddhism of the past. By retreating to a past when Korean Buddhism held an advantageous position over Japanese Buddhism, Ch'oe was compensating for the gap established in relatively recent times and assuaging a national pride that had been wounded by colonialism. In fact, this type of psychological disposition was

common among Korean intellectuals of the colonial period. Korean intellectuals attempted to compensate for the dismal present by invoking the traditional legacies of a 'brighter past'—Turtle Ships (*kŏbuksŏn*, ironclad ships used against the Japanese invaders in 1592–1598), advanced printing technology, pottery, and so on. However, this was not necessarily of benefit to Korean Buddhism, as the more brighter past is celebrated, the more the present appears dismal. This could result exactly in the effects desired by Japanese colonialists who, by stressing the elevated cultural achievements of the Silla period, in fact emphasized the 'stagnation' of present-day Korea and sought to justify their colonial rule. The bright past did not offer resources to overcome the present, but instead highlighted its torpor. The tendency to immerse in a bright past and deny the dismal present, thus shunning reality, was self-damaging.

The behavior of enlightenment intellectuals—those who compared Korean and modern Japanese Buddhism, demanded that Korean Buddhism actively partake in civilization and enlightenment but longed for it to remain a tradition representing something uniquely Korean—was deemed quite perplexing by Buddhists, and self-contradictory as well. Buddhism was the religion of Japan, the colonizer, and also a major part of the tradition of Korea, the colonized. However, the effort to seek identity in a golden age rather than the present while simultaneously denying or restructuring tradition in the name of civilization and enlightenment was not peculiar to Korean intellectuals alone. Japanese intellectuals shared a similar stance, although it differed in objective. For Japanese intellectuals such as Takahashi Tōru (1878–1967), the current state of Korean Buddhism was stagnation itself and hence an object for improvement. Searching for and emphasizing a historical golden age of Korean Buddhism was not only an attempt to justify colonial rule, but also a necessary groundwork for defining present-day Buddhism as in need of improvement. Hence, there was no reluctance on the part of the Japanese to praise Silla Buddhism as a golden age of Korean Buddhism, while Korean intellectuals' praise of Silla Buddhism was no less. In their case, it was not performed in order to cast light on the insignificance of the current moment, but rather to obtain psychological compensation for the present and restore national pride through the glories of the past. Ch'oe Namsŏn's attempt to seek out what was uniquely Korean within Buddhism and to prove that Korean culture was superior to Japanese culture in East Asia in his paper, "Chosŏn Buddhism: Its Position in the Cultural History of the East" can be understood along the same lines. In one way, Buddhism was a more suitable example from the East Asian cultural legacy to demonstrate the superiority of Korea over Japan. It was a well-established historical fact which did not require further defense that Silla Buddhism enjoyed an elevated status in East Asia and had served as the model for the teachings of Japanese Buddhism. This truth was self-evident due to awareness that Japanese Buddhism was originally influenced by Korea.

Ch'oe Namsŏn authored an article with the title "Korean Buddhism and her Position in the Cultural History of the Orient" for presentation at the Pan-Asian Pacific Buddhist Youth Conference held in Hawaii in 1930. As implied by the title, the article was intended to demonstrate the peculiarity and uniqueness of Korean Buddhism within the context of World Buddhism. He mentioned that Korean Buddhism, with the special geographical background of a peninsula, was the realization of 'comprehensive Buddhism' (*chŏn pulgyo*), 'syncretic Buddhism' (*chonghap pulgyo*), and the final conclusion of the Buddhism that originated in India. He continued to point out that the individual most responsible for this was no other than Wŏnhyo (617–686) of the Silla period. On one hand, his contention was a response to the general view held by Takahashi Tōru and other Japanese scholars who perceived Korean Buddhism as "adhering to original Chinese Buddhism" and regarded its overall nature to be "dependence and lack of originality." One the other hand, however, his take on narrating Korean Buddhism was in alignment with the general trend of Buddhist studies in Japan and China, which attempted to reconstruct the history of East Asian Buddhism from the perspective of their own 'national Buddhisms.' While Ch'oe Namsŏn argued that from the viewpoint of the '*past*' Korean Buddhism was a 'comprehensive Buddhism' and the 'final conclusion,' Japanese scholars, from the viewpoint of the '*present*,' saw Japanese Buddhism to be the 'comprehensive' and 'complete' version. This opinion as expressed by Japanese intellectuals was widely accepted among Buddhist scholars worldwide. Takakusu Junjirō (1866–1945) in his work *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, based on his lectures at the University of Hawaii in 1938–1939, summarized that "the only way to exhibit the entire Buddhist philosophy in all its different schools is to give a resume of Buddhism in Japan. It is in Japan that the entire Buddhist literature, the Tripitaka, is preserved and studied."[13] Wing-Tsit Chan and Charles A. Moore, the co-editors of this book, wrote in the editors' preface as follows:[14]

> Some readers may believe that Japanese Buddhism has been overstressed in this volume, but as Professor Takakusu states, it is justified—or necessitated—by the fact that in Japan "the whole of Buddhism has been preserved," as well as the fact that, in Japan, Buddhism is the living and active faith of the mass of the people.

Although such claims cannot be accepted from today's scholarly perspective, it must be acknowledged that this was the mainstream view worldwide in Buddhist scholarship of the time.

The difference between Ch'oe Namsŏn and Takakusu Junjiro is essentially a difference between the 'past' and the 'present.' While Takakusu emphasized the 'present' of Japanese Buddhism, Ch'oe focused on the 'past' of Korean Buddhism. Although the consequences were not what Ch'oe had intended, he had established a foundation for Korean Buddhists

to concentrate not on the modern reformation of the present but on the 'brighter past.' By purely reifying this 'brighter past,' Ch'oe and other intellectuals' 'traditionalist stance' on Korean Buddhism prevented Korean Buddhists from moving forward with the modernization of Korean Buddhism. If the religion of Japan had not been Buddhism, or had Korean Buddhism not enjoyed a 'brighter past,' would Korean Buddhism now find itself in a more promising situation?

## CONCLUSION

Pursuing a nationalist historiography, the Chogye Order would mark the completion and conclusion of modern Korean Buddhism, since it was perceived as a denomination that maintained the legitimacy and national identity of Korean Buddhism in the face of the oppressive assimilation policies by the Japanese colonial authorities. Nationalist historiography simplifies the multitudinous aspects of modern Korean Buddhism into a binary opposition of pro- and anti-Japan, which in turn deprives it of the opportunity to explore a more complex and manifold development/deployment of modern Korean Buddhism that is unsuitable for reduction to a facile dichotomy. It also fails to deliver historical meaning to the reformation programs that emerged in the modern period. Kim Kwangsik pointed out that Korean Buddhism acceded to the internal demand for popularization of Buddhism and the social demand for Buddhists to participate in the nationalist movement and incorporated them into what he referred to as a nationalist Buddhism. He concluded that this was the primary trend in modern Korean Buddhism, of which the historical traits and significance of Buddhist thinking could be summarized as follows:[15]

> For this reason, nationalist Buddhism is the logic and result of efforts and concerns that assume the universality of Buddhism (doctrine, teaching), realize the historical calling endowed on modern Buddhism (nationalist movement, independence movement), and maintain the traditions of Korean Buddhism. Hence, nationalist Buddhism is a product of reestablishing the identity of modern Korean Buddhism by practicing a modern modification of Mahāyāna Buddhism and maintaining the history and tradition of Korean Buddhism, all the while never straying from Buddhist doctrine or teaching.

When discussing nationalist Buddhism, Kim had Manhae in mind as the definitive figure. However, any attempt to confine Manhae's reformist position on Buddhism to the formula of 'nationalist Buddhism' is questionable, as reflected in his pursuit of 'World Buddhism' and his perception of modern Buddhism in relation to modernity. Kim did not deny, however, that the question of the 'pro-Japanese collaboration' could hinder the objective

study of modern Buddhism and warned that "passing judgment about Buddhist history from the present standpoint could be a dangerous act." In this respect, he appeared to be fully aware of and in sympathy with Auerback's criticism of presentism and my own warnings regarding the danger of a 'teleological historical approach.'[16] Nonetheless, his nationalist historical perception of understanding modern Korean Buddhism as a process of the formation of a nationalist Buddhism remains intact. As has been argued thus far, the theory of 'nationalist Buddhism' reduces the complex dilemmatic situation of modern Korean Buddhism to the dichotomy of the pro-Japan/anti-Japan formula and banishes the diversity of modernization and reformist efforts from the historical space.

From the standpoint of modern Buddhism, the Chogye Order is seen as an anti-modernist denomination seeking the 'restoration of tradition.' Still, the nationalist historiography places the Chogye Order at the core of modern Buddhist history and deprives the modernization efforts by reformers, such as Manhae, of any contemporary significance by treating their proposed reform programs as historical anomalies.

The new conceptual point for narrative proposed by this chapter, 'dilemma,' should provide the lens for understanding the manifold ideas and exertions of Buddhism that escaped attention via the nationalist structure of the colonial experience. It lays a foundation for the endowment of historical coordination. Furthermore, it provides a historical context for the active social engagement of Buddhists and the reformation effort of the Chogye Order that has been recognized since the 1990s, thus creating a basis for describing the history of modern Buddhism that has been in progress since the early twentieth century. However, just as we should not narrow the diverse efforts and attempts, including the trials and errors made by Buddhists during the early modern and colonial period, down to a restricted nationalist perspective, we should not reduce them into the one concept of 'dilemma.' Furthermore, 'dilemma' is but one of a number of frameworks and tools that enable us to view and understand the entirety of modern Korean Buddhism; we should try not to examine an individual's life or individual incidents related to Buddhism through this single concept or as a simple result of such a dilemma. Even in a dilemmatic situation, individuals invariably make their own choices. One should understand such individual choices within historical contexts, and, from inside these contexts, the situation of Korean Buddhism can be seen from the perspective of dilemma.

## NOTES

1. This mainstream narrative of Korean academia continues to be questioned and challenged by foreign scholars of Korean Buddhism. Vladimir Tikhonov criticized the historical perceptions of Korean academia that judge Korean monks of the Choson period according to nationalist standards of Pro- and Anti-Japanese. In his view, Korean academia "[degenerated] into the trial of

offenders whose only transgression was that they did not know what rules of the ideological and political game would be effective in a century's time." [Vladimir Tikhonov, "Did They Sell the Sect and Change the Patriarchs? Korean Buddhist, Pro-Japanese Collaboration (1877–1905) and Its Modern Critics," *Papers of the British Association for Korean Studies* 8 (2003), 101.] Based on recent work, Micah Auerback pointed out that the simplistic division of Anti- and Pro-Japanese "turned historical research into a criminal investigation." For that reason, the study of modern Korean Buddhism in Korean academia has resulted in an "oppression of other historical views and the uncritical use of this dichotomy has damaged the potentials for historical study" [Auerback (2008), 18].

2. Cho Sungtaek, "Kŭndae Pulgyohak kwa Han'guk kŭndae Pulgyo" (Modern Buddhology and Korea's Modern Buddhism), *Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'gu* 45 (2006): 77–108.
3. Micah Auerback, "Rethinking the Historiography of 'Pro-Japanese Buddhism': The Chōsen Bukkyōdan and the Debate over Clerical Marriage in 1920s Korea." [unpublished mss. pp. 3]. However, the Korean version, "'Ch'inil Pulgyo' Yŏksahak ŭi chaego: Chosŏn Pulgyodan kwa 1920 nyŏndae Chosŏn esŏŭi Sŭngnyŏ Kyŏrhon e kwanhan nonchaeng" (Rethinking the Historiography of 'Pro-Japanese Buddhism:' The Chōsen Bukkyōdan and the Debate over Clerical Marriage in 1920s Korea) was published in the *Asea Yon'gu* 51, No. 3 (2008): 15–53.
4. Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895–1919* (Columbia University Press, 2002). Especially "Authentic Culture, Pure Identities," 60–64; "A Lost Korean and Eastern Civilization, 80–86.
5. In his paper "Current Situation of Chinese Buddhism" (1931, *Pulgyo*) Manhae looked very favorably upon the situation of Chinese Buddhism at the time, especially the tendency to laity-centered Buddhism. In addition, he expressed his opinion on Korean and Japanese Buddhism briefly but succinctly: " . . . Buddhism of Joseon has not yet broken away from its convention of temple-centered Buddhism, hence, it always operates around the temples and monks, which is still a long way from socialization and nationalization; and the Buddhism of Japan is 'Japanese Buddhism,' a statist Buddhism in the narrowest sense, that seeks to link state and Buddhism. Japanese Buddhism can only be seen as the ethical version of loyalty and patriotism, sharing the political responsibilities of encouraging statism." [*Pulgyo* 88, October 1, 1932; *Han Yongun Chŏnjip* (Complete Works of Han Yongun), Vol. 2, 237.] As can be inferred from his criticism of the statist Buddhism of Japan, Manhae widely criticized the union of Buddhism and concepts related to social or statist practice such as 'patriotism' or 'nation.' Rather, speculating based on his positive assessment of China's effort to reform modern Buddhism as "Chinese Buddhism tried to set global/cosmopolitan Buddhism as standard of life for humankind," it seems that he maintained a cosmopolitan orientation that could not be confined by the framework of 'nation.' In this sense, it appears that Gwang-sik Kim's interpretation of Manhae's Buddhist reform as part of a 'nationalist movement' and attempts to fit it into the context of 'nationalist Buddhism' requires a through reconsideration.
6. The objective of Manhae's argument against the regulations on Korean Buddhist temples issued by the Office of Japanese Governor General was to achieve the freedom of religion through the 'separation of church and state' that was stipulated in the constitutions of Japan and European countries. ["Separate Church and State", *Pulgyo* 87, September 1, 1931; *Han Yongun Chŏnjip*, Vol. 2, 145.

7. This title of this section was taken from a Korean translation of Andre Schmid's *Korea Between Empires, 1895–1919*, Chapter 3, Section 17, "The Brighter Past and the Dismal Present" [Schmid (2002), 268].
8. Editorial, "P'yŏn'go Sŭngnyŏ tongp'o" (The Public Statement for the Buddhist Monks, My Fellow Countrymen), *Taehan maeil sinbo* (Korea Daily News), December 13, 1908.
9. Meaning 'the knowledge of the West.'
10. "Myoum gwanseum" (The mystic sound of goddess of mercy), *Pulgyo* 50–51 (1928): 63–64.
11. Ibid., p. 64.
12. "Chamjhi mothal il" (An Intolerable Thing), *Tong'a ilbo* (October 25–31, 1927); also the *Ch'oe Namsŏn Chŏnjip* (The Collected Works of Ch'oe Namsŏn), Vol. 9, 175–176.
13. *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, ed. Wing-Tsit Chan and Charles A. Moore (Honolulu: Office Appliance Co., Ltd., 1956), 10.
14. "Editor's Preface," ibid.
15. Kim Kwangsik (2007), 83.
16. Kim Kwangsik (2006), 39; 40.

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# Part II

# Militarism and the Buddhist Monks

# 4 A Path to Militant Buddhism

## Thai Buddhist Monks as Representations

*Michael Jerryson*

What determines a militant religion? When applied, religion is fundamentally a social exercise; however, this sociality does not necessitate militancy. The practice of making merit or performing good works can be as mundane as planting trees or donating money to an orphanage. However, the social dimension of religion has a militant side in which making merit and good works apply to war-affiliated activities.[1] Scott Appleby notes religion's dual valences toward militancy and peace-making in his *Ambivalence of the Sacred*.[2] It is in this manner that the question of militant religion feeds into the larger discourse of religious violence, one that has consumed the attention of historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists alike. Whether faced with the theory of rebounding violence,[3] Girardian conceptions of the scapegoat,[4] intonations of cosmic war,[5] or systemic pathologies,[6] scholars of religious violence expose coterminous religious and political dimensions. And it is in this environment of religio-political collusion that militant religion flourishes.

This essay examines the rise of militant Thai Buddhism within the conflict of southern Thailand.[7] Like many other countries around the world, Thailand has no constitutional provisions for Thai Buddhism and is often heralded as for a secular government (*rathabān thāng lok*).[8] However, as Suwanna Satha-Anand shows quite clearly in her essay "The Question of Violence in Thai Buddhism" in this volume, Thai Buddhism is the *de facto national* religion. Just as though religion contains a dual valence, so too does national religion. In this particular case we find three conditions instrumental in the accentuation of a militant religious form of the Thai national religion: the space of social conflict, a politicized religious representation, and an assault on that politicized representation.

Before examining these conditions, I will briefly treat the relationship of representation to violence. Thai Buddhist monks' representations exemplify the State's process of politicizing Buddhist monks, which intensify religious tensions in southern Thailand. Monastic representations also illustrate the danger inherent in a State's politicization of religious leaders. The murder of a monk transforms the regional conflict of separatism between the Thai State and militant Malay Muslims into a religious warfare.

## THE POWER OF REPRESENTATION

It is a typical early Thursday morning in Pattani province. Monks in their saffron robes from Wat Noppawongsaram slowly walk outside their monastery and down Magrood road. They are performing their morning alms, an activity through which they gather sustenance and, in turn, offer Buddhists a chance to make merit. In front of them is a young Thai police officer dressed in army fatigues and holding an M-16. He smiles at me as they pass by, and I notice that there is another policeman following them.

Friday, the following day, two policemen are taking a break in the lounge of My Garden Hotel, one of the few hotels in capital district of Pattani that provides lodging for international travelers. The two policemen are stationed at the hotel to protect both visitors and the property. I sit across from them and ask about the police and soldiers guarding monks. Have any monks been killed, I ask? Saksin, a policeman hailing from Chonburi province who has an M-16 with a sticker reading "I Love You, Thailand" answers. "Yes, monks have been killed, and if we find these murderers, we'll shoot them on sight."[9] The amalgam of nationalism and religiosity in this performative moment is striking, but is underscored by the power embedded in the body of the Buddhist monk.

As Marte Nilsen discusses in her essay "Military Temples and Saffron-Robed Soldiers: Legitimacy and the Securing Buddhism in Southern Thailand" in this volume, monks require military protection in order to continue their ritual of morning alms. Although locals in the southernmost provinces are now accustomed to the sight, the military escort of Buddhist monks is a new and disturbing sight for Thais living outside the conflict zone. Since January 2004 Malay Muslim militants have killed and injured over seventeen southern Buddhist monks. These numbers do not fully reflect the violence on Thai Buddhist monasticism, as it is difficult to acquire accurate statistics and some attacks are not reported. The attacks that were recorded predominantly occurred when monks were on their daily routine of collecting alms.

As indicated in Table 4.1, militant tactics might have changed in the last several years, as the highest amount of attacks on monks and *wat* (monastic

*Table 4.1* Monastic Casualties in the Southernmost Provinces, 2004–2008[10]

| | *Wat* Attacked/Burned | Monks Killed | Monks Injured |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2004 | 9 | 4 | 2 |
| 2005 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| 2006 | 1 | – | 6 |
| 2007 | 2* | – | 3 |
| TOTAL | 16* | 5 | 17 |

compounds) occurred between 2004 and 2005. However, we must also consider other variables that may explain this change as well. Since 2004 many *wat* in the red zone no longer have monks going on morning alms, making it more difficult for militants to target and attack monks. Furthermore, the number of police and military guarding the monks has increased. The change in monastic routines and military protection suggest another theory to the drop in monk casualties of the three border provinces.[11] While there is a decrease in monastic casualties, the murder of a monk still provokes intense reactions among Thai Buddhists, especially among the Thai Buddhist military.

In 2007 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as International Crisis Group and Amnesty International found a rise in Thai military brutality against Malay Muslims in the southernmost provinces. Their reports and others refer to a Thai Buddhist soldier raping a Malay Muslim woman, beating to death Muslim suspects, and burning down Islamic schools.[12] Perhaps two historical markers for military brutality come from the Khru Se Mosque Affair on April 28, 2004, and the Tak Bai Affair on October 25 of the same year. Each instance highlighted extreme military brutality both to Malay Muslim militants and Malay Muslim civilians. During the Khru Se Mosque Affair, the Thai military's heavy-handed assaults claimed the lives of over 100 Malay Muslim militants. Unlike the Khru Se Mosque Affair, the Tak Bai Affair involved local Malay Muslims engaged in a peaceful protest. Police and military shot, beat to death, and suffocated over 80 local protestors.

For Thai Buddhists such as the policeman Saksin at the My Garden Hotel and General Thammarak, the act of murdering a monk is seen as defacing incredibly powerful and personal values. In this vein, the significance of a Thai Buddhist monk's identity becomes fused with Thai Buddhism and Thai nationalism. If someone were to attack a monk, they would be attacking these two principles and military reactions to an attack display the intensity provoked when someone attacks such ideals. State reactions to the murder of monks began on January 28, 2004, when the Thai State considered imposing a curfew in the three southernmost provinces, which already were under martial law. Thai authorities cited the murders of monks as one of their chief reasons:

> Defence Minister Thammarak Isarangkurana Ayudhaya said [curfew] was being considered following a series of machete attacks on Buddhist monks and students. Three monks have died and one was seriously injured. Two students were also wounded. A curfew would facilitate all-out military and police operations against separatist bandits. "Now that the bandits have gone berserk, our men must become crazed too, to fight them," Gen Thammarak said.[13]

While two students were wounded, it is doubtful that General Thammarak's comments about the bandits going 'berserk' were in reference to

these attacks. He and his men were ready to become "crazed too" due to the murder of Buddhist monks. These sentiments have become all the more relevant in the recent years with the rise of Buddhist vigilantism, with groups such Thais United (*Ruam Thai*).[14]

But how does the representation of a Buddhist monk become such a powerful concept? The importance of monks in Thai society is due in part to their continual visual references in movies, television, newspapers and local flyers. Thai pop-cultural images of monks often highlight two different dimensions of the Buddhist monk: his sacrality and/or his patriotism. A Buddhist's perception of the monk as an abstract quality or representation is the inverted process of sacralizing art (in which the viewer becomes intimately connected to the abstract through the sacred) or, in accordance with Jean Baudrillard, is the systemic process in which society converts reality into symbols and signs.[15]

Representation is part of an inherent social process of constructing symbolic capital.[16] What we do, and more importantly, *what we are perceived to do*, bestows a measure of prestige upon us. People often derive the significance of a person from her/his duties and actions. Anthropologist Thomas Kirsch writes that Thai Buddhist monks are perceived to be the most auspicious and revered figures in Thailand.[17]

One Thai custom that exemplifies the elevated status of Buddhist monasticism in Thai society is the *wai*. This is a form of greeting wherein two hands are pressed together in a form of deference and respect. Thai Buddhists there are three types of people who require such a display of respect: parents, teachers, and monks, each of whom is seen as mentor of sorts. Within this context, each enjoys a superior social status to the one who initiates the *wai*. But, if we compare these types of people, we find an implicit hierarchy of respect. A teacher does not *wai* a parent, unless the context is such that s/he is no longer a teacher but rather a sibling, and a monk never initiates a *wai* to teachers and parents. His elevated status is such that the opposite is expected or accepted.

Buddhist monks are the most revered figures in the Thai social order because of their duties and actions, particularly their pursuit of awakening by forsaking of attachments.[18] This *perceived* austerity and ascetic practice becomes associated with the monk, transforming him into a "field-of-merit."[19] This sacralization of the monk's body is enhanced by his association to Buddhist sacred teachings (Pāli: *dhamma*).

Outside of a local context, which allows for personal interaction and complex associations, Thai society identifies monks as sacred actors worthy of veneration. Thai newspapers are replete with scandals involving monks, but it is their social sacrality that makes their transgressions scandalous. To unpack this abstraction, I propose that monks' socially and religiously prescribed functions become their persona, and in turn, the monks become embodiments of those functions (among others, the Buddhist aspiration for *nibbana*, liberation). An attack on a monk signifies an attack on the locus of

the Buddhist sacred—the embodied path to awakening. Viewing the murder of a Buddhist monk against this backdrop, it is easier to understand the various Buddhist vigilante groups surfacing and growing in southern Thailand.

The politicizing of monks enables them to represent the Thai State. Just as amulets represent former monk or the Buddha, monks invoke more than a governmental agency; they also represent the corresponding ideology of the State, Thai nationalism. The politicization of religious actors and principles is not unique to Thailand, but is part of a larger global phenomenon. Sociologist José Casanova notes that in recent years we have witnessed an increasing and widespread de-privatization and re-politicization of religion throughout the world.[20] While Casanova places the start of this increase in the 1980s, the Thai context existed long before. As early as the 1880s, the Thai Buddhist monk has proselytized under official State programs, thereby serving two different institutions simultaneously: the Thai State and the Buddhist Sangha.

In an era of governments that employ the term 'nation-state,' there is an inherent connection between the State and its prescribed nationalism. In a Buddhist society like Thailand, a monk working to spread the Buddhist teachings is seen as serving his State *and nation*. Thus, monks who represent both the religious and national domains of society embody a significant amount of power in the aforementioned associations. All it takes for this power to be fully realized is violence.

## POLITICIZING MONKS IN VIOLENCE: VOLUNTEER MONKS

The Thai State's appropriation of Buddhist monastic duties and roles does not elicit intense violent Buddhist reactions in three southernmost provinces. Rather, there are three conditions that evoke this—a space of conflict, a politicized Buddhist representation and the defacement of the representation.

State use of Buddhist monks for national projects is not uncommon—whether in Thailand, or in other Buddhist countries such as Cambodia, Burma, or Japan. However, the Thai State use of Buddhist monks in times of violence is unusual. Apart from the campaign against Communism in the 1970s discussed in the aforementioned essay by Suwanna Satha-Anand in this volume (Chapter 8), the only other time the Thai State used monks during violence has been during the current conflict in the southernmost provinces. This instance is particularly sensitive due to the ethno-religious divisions between the Thai Malay Muslims and the Thai and Thai Chinese Buddhists and, thus, deserves special attention. Due to the already present religious identities and divisions, the impact of politicizing the representation of Buddhist monks has been enhanced.

One of the recent developments in this violence is that of targeting of Buddhist monks. In the *Bangkok Post* editorial of January 28, 2004, a reporter noted the following:

> In 30 years of troubles in the South, this is the first such assault on representatives of this most venerated institution. The attacks took place on Jan 22 and 24, leaving two monks and a novice dead and a third monk with serious injuries.[21]

The editorial failed to establish the proper historical context, ignoring the fact that violence in the southernmost provinces existed for centuries, and it neglected to note previous threats to the Sangha in the southernmost provinces, such as the 2002 bomb threat at Wat Chang Hai. Nevertheless, the significance of the statement remains. Monks as "representatives" of the most venerated institution were attacked.

The continual attacks on monks prompted Queen Sirikit to marshal a media fanfare to the southernmost provinces. On her birthday she expressed the need for the nation to unite over the issue of southern violence: "Even Buddhist monks have been killed. I don't want people to sit still. Even I myself have to come out to speak."[22] Her speech included a full disclosure of the power of monks' representation. Now an attack on Buddhist monks became a reason to act.

Queen Sirikit did more than voice her opinions about the dangers to Buddhist monks in the southernmost provinces. In 2004, with the help of the ONB, the Queen formed the Volunteer Monk Program (*phra āsāsamak*) in order to address particular problems in the borderland provinces. The program, popularly referred to as the "Queen's Project," followed the model of missionary programs similar to that the one initiated by the Phra Thammathut in the 1960s. Its goals were simple: to support the Buddhist laity, increase the number of Buddhist monks, and protect the integrity of Buddhism in the Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. Monks from around the country were asked to spend at least three months in one of the southern *wat*, many of them in the red zone. Although the Queen's Project was designed to affect only the Buddhist population in the three southernmost provinces, it became a powerful example of politicizing monks' as well.

The Queen's project is not the first time we see the Thai State employing monks to spread nationalistic sentiments in the southernmost provinces. The Thai government also implemented policies to redress the Thai Buddhist—Malay Muslim imbalance in one of Sarit's programs called the Self-Help Colony (*nikhom sangton-ēng*).[23] One criticism of these projects has been their lack of sensitivity training required for Buddhist monks foreign to Malay and Islamic practices. Part of the cause of this absence is simply because there is not enough time in the scheduled training program to have it.

Volunteer monk training for the Queen's Project takes place in several locations, the most popular at Wat Don Mūang in Bangkok and at Wat Chang Hai in Pattani. In Bangkok, the training occurs two days prior to a monk's relocation. Nearly every volunteer monk attends the training session, which lasts from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. The morning is reserved for merit-making rituals. Buddhist laity in Bangkok donated items for the volunteer

monks to use during their stay in the southernmost provinces. The merit-making is followed by a break for lunch. The afternoon time consisted of a seminar on the purposes of the Volunteer Monk program, which is led by soldiers, monks and laity. Throughout the seminar monks are told about the growing threat to Buddhism and how their presence could help preserve religious order in the southernmost provinces. Only one month after their deployment in 2007, one volunteer monk I shall call Phra Laek from Wat Mailuu recounted how they were informed of the physical dangers as well as the symbolic importance of their mission:

> We were told to be careful because there were people who wanted to do away with monks in this area. When there are no monks left, Buddhists will move out, too. They showed us how to live here safely and they showed many pictures of monks here who had been attacked.[24]

The training emphasized the national importance to their mission and underscored a Muslim threat.

The volunteer monks' lack of training adversely affected the southern populace, materializing most visibly in the candor and demeanor of the people employed. Generally, two types of monks are attracted to volunteer service in southern Thailand. The first type is resolutely patriotic; they maintain that their jobs are deeply rooted in *kammic* obligations to the king and country and that their stay in these temples is a testament to their desire to help the country and Thai Buddhism. The second type of volunteer monks is more interested in personal gain; they view their work as an opportunity to achieve fame and financial success. Neither of these types felt they profited from the training exercises. Yet, regardless of their training or intents, missionary projects like the Queen's Project comprise a visible reminder of the disenfranchisement of Malay Muslims from national government. There are no government-sponsored Islamic projects working to spread the teachings of Muhammad.

The Thai State continues to encourage volunteer monks to relocate to southern Thailand. *The Nation* reported that, during the beginning of the Buddhist Lent (*khaopansā*) in 2007, 346 monks departed from Bangkok for the "deep south" went in order to "instill a sense of confidence in the region."[25] Wat Mailuu retained the service of three volunteer monks a year. Most volunteer monks did not stay longer than their minimum term, necessitating the Project to send fresh recruits in 2006 and 2007. A *wat* in the capital district of Pattani received one volunteer monk in 2007 that did not stay very long, and none were requested for the international pilgrimage site, Wat Chang Hai. These cultural ambassadors are more than link between the State and the localities; they also act as embodied representations of the State and Thai Buddhism. The absence of such a representation would be an absence of State-religious vitality. As the current director of the ONB puts it,

> Nowadays, there are a small number of people who want to ordain because of economic and family responsibilities. So, there are not enough monks in the wat. Hence, we look for volunteers to ordain. The main reason is to have enough monks in each wat. It is important because we don't want people to think that monks are extinct.[26]
>
> The ONB considers it dangerous for people to *think* that Buddhist monks are extinct in the southern provinces; the image of a strong and healthy Buddhist monasticism has to be maintained. The Phra Thammačārik Project, the Phra Thammathut Program, and the recent Queen's Project politically and financially support monks to mobilize and strengthen the presence of the State in regions that were deemed 'culturally' unstable or deficiently loyal.

Through the exercise of programs like the Queen's Project, we find that the State enhances the political dimensions of Buddhist monks. This politicization has not gone unnoticed by Islamic militants. One vivid example occurred when Prime Minister Thaksin traveled to Pattani province during the Muslim celebrations of Hari Raya in 2005, a few months after the government dispatched new volunteer monks to the southernmost provinces. Awaiting Thaksin in over thirty paddy fields were political scarecrows, warning him of violent reprisals.

The scarecrows were draped in the national flag and had a picture of Thaksin for a head. They also contained written warnings. One message read: "As you bombed Muslim mosques, Buddhist temples were set on fire. As you shot dead *ustazes* [Islamic teachers], Buddhist monks were killed. As you arrested Malayu people, we will kill your people."[27]

If we carefully examine the properties used in these political effigies, it becomes evident that the scarecrows symbolized the State, particularly the head of State, Thaksin Shinawatra. But the effigies also emphasized a particular religious dimension to the State. The national flag wrapped around the scarecrow has been a symbol of Thai nationality since 1917. Its three stripes stand for the nation (*chāt*), religion (*sāsanā*), and monarchy (*phra mahākaset*). Whereas *sāsanā* could stand for all religions—Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and others, thereby inferring a religiously tolerant State—the politicizing of Buddhist monks promotes a State advocacy for only one religion, Buddhism. The warning attached to the political effigy of Thaksin illustrated the Islamic militant perspective of the Thai State: the Thai State was Buddhist. Because of this, any State conflict with the militants put the State's "people" (Buddhists), monks and *wat* at risk. And if Buddhists, monks, and *wat* represented the State, militant attacks on them equated attacking the State.

While the State is not currently building *wat* in the deep south or requesting Buddhists to immigrate there, they are dispatching volunteer monks to the southernmost provinces, where they serve as living emblems of Thai nationalism. A volunteer monk from Wat Mailuu, Phra Anek, explained his predicament, reflecting the polarizing experience he is undergoing:

> I didn't expect to stay here for Buddhist Lent. I visited the abbot here. But the abbot asked me to stay here because there are not enough monks. Actually, I wanted to continue my studies for my Bachelor's degree, but he asked me, so I decide to stay here for an extra three months. The situation for Thai Buddhists here is so pitiful. They want to make merit but it is hard for them because there are not enough monks. We are monks and people can make merit because of us, and so this is what I am pleased to do for the people here. This life is worthwhile for me, so long as I can do something for my nation. This is why I wanted to come here. . . . We just can't go out of the *wat* because there are many Muslims outside. They think that we are from a different religion. We have no problems with them. But they see us as the enemy.[28]

Phra Anek experiences two simultaneous effects from his politicization. He senses a patriotic obligation by staying and serving at Wat Mailuu, but also senses that Muslims see him as an enemy. Phra Anek has not done anything personally to the Muslims to feel this way; rather, it is his representation that creates this polarization. He and other volunteer monks continue to be deployed to the border provinces. On July 3, 2009, the Thai State flew 148 Buddhist monks to Pattani province in order for them to arrive at their posts before the start of Buddhist Lent (July 7, 2009). As in the past, Buddhist monks were brought from the North and Northeast provinces, and given minimal training before reaching their assignments among the 100 different *wat* in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat.[29]

The politicized representation of Buddhist monks lacks individualistic and personal associations. Like soldiers and police, monks become extensions of the State. A Buddhist monk who might recently have been ordained in the central province of Chonburi would lose his local identity during his volunteer service in the south. He would become a defender of Buddhism and another target for militants. The consolidation of national and religious identifications in the monk can yield intense and powerful reactions.

## DEFACING A REPRESENTATION

As politicized agents, monks represent both the State and the Thai Sangha. Because of the monk's dual function, murdering a southern monk becomes an act of defacing a political and religious symbol. This has the potential for greater and more intense consequences. An example of this occurred on October 16, 2005, when Wat Phromprasit in Pattani province was raided. Two Buddhist statues were beheaded, two temple boys (*dekwat*) were killed, a seventy-eight year-old abbot was hacked to death, and the *wat* was set on fire. When Thai newspapers reported on the destruction of the *wat*, they speculated that it was a result of the ongoing Muslim insurgency.

The media placed the attack on Wat Phromprasit into a nationalistic context. Pattani already was under martial law, and Malay Muslim militants periodically killed Thai police and soldiers. At times the media assumes local acts of violence under the larger umbrella of insurgency. People living outside of the three southernmost provinces were divorced from the violence at Wat Phromprasit, most particularly, from its local context. For the national newspapers, the act of murdering the abbot and his temple boys fit neatly into the binary narrative of Muslim insurgents against the Thai nation-state. The *Bangkok Post* reports that the Thai News Agency "said the fifteen-minute attack on Phromprasit temple in Panare district came after the insurgents touched off fireworks to distract nearby people and security forces."[30] The *Nation* theorized that twenty Muslim insurgents were behind the events.[31]

The violence at Wat Phromprasit was much more than insurgent attack on State Buddhism. People were murdered, and in this scenario, due to specific reasons. In this context it is important to remember that a Buddhist monk is more than a representation of the nation; he also is a person living in a local community. Before the attack on the *wat*, fireworks were set off, presumably to distract the community from the attackers' intended victims. There were at least ten attackers (some newspaper theorized twenty) and their onslaught lasted only fifteen minutes. The large number of attackers and the short amount of time suggest a well-organized attack by separatists; yet, when positioning the attack in a local context, they produce a local issue.[32] Pattani Thai Chinese and Thai Buddhist residents offer different and localized accounts of the murders. Some framed the conflict in a very personal and localized context. One account reported that the violence began with a feud between one of the *dekwats* and a young Malay-Muslim. For many of the locals living near the *wat*, the attack upon Wat Phromprasit was an escalation of a feud between two locals, not a national conflict between Malay Muslim separatists and the Thai Buddhist State.

Reactions to the violence at Wat Phromprasit reflect the latent power of a monk's politicized representation. Michael Taussig, writing on the power of the negative, notes that the act of defacement releases an unprecedented level of sacrality from an object. He explains,

> When the human body, a nation's flag, money, or a public statue is *defaced*, a strange surplus of negative energy is likely to be aroused from within the defaced thing itself. It is now in a state of *desecration*, the closest many of us are going to get to the sacred in this modern world.[33]

In the devastation of Wat Phromprasit on October 16, 2005, a national emblem, a public statue, and, to use Taussig's language, "human bodies" were defaced. The motives for this attack remain unclear, but the emotionally charged repercussions rose to a national level. The National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) saw this attack as emblematic of the shift in

the local mentalities for violence and deduced the following: "A murderous attack on Buddhist monks inside temple walls thus eroded the cultural boundaries that traditionally served to limit political violence in Thai society since days of old."[34] For the NRC, the act of defacement indicated an escalation in violence.

Effects of the violence are still visible at Wat Phromprasit. Its location at the end of a very long and narrow road off the highway makes it susceptible to attack. When I visited the *wat* on December 26, 2006, those present were off-duty police and the new abbot. Many of the buildings were rebuilt. The ONB later explained that it was important to fund Wat Phromprasit's restoration because it was now an "important symbol." The main pavilion (*sālā*) was behind one of the buildings, and it was there that I found the abbot and some of the off-duty police.

On the floor of the *sālā* was an M-16 and attached to the ceiling were two television monitors. Only one monitor was on, and it was for surveillance. The screen was divided into four sections, all of which were live camera feeds of the wat's perimeter. The new abbot was sitting in the middle of the floor and was reserved, but open to sharing some of his thoughts.

He was originally from Panāre, the district of Wat Phromprasit. Only thirty years old, the abbot had been ordained merely nine years prior to receiving this new position in his home district (*ampē*). His age and experience are not considered unique, but they do suggest the lack of more experienced monks to fill the role. The abbot views the southern violence as strictly religious. Attributing the violence to Muslim teenagers influenced by new Middle Eastern Islamic teachings, his perspective is more aligned with that of the national narrative than of the local laity. When I asked him why his predecessor was killed and the *wat* attacked, he replied that six or seven Muslim teenagers had performed these deeds based on the *wat*'s location:

> This *wat* is in the field and is quite remote. Furthermore, we had no protection. It was safe for them. Actually, they said they would set fire to a different *wat*. The police went to protect that *wat*. So they changed [locations] and set fire to this *wat*.[35]

The abbot thought the *wat* might be attacked again. He requested that I not take photographs of the *wat*'s military equipment because it might compromise its safety. The abbot attributed the current violence to Islamic extremism, instead of drugs, poverty, and other causes. This mono-causal analysis of the violence is an effect of living the conflict zone, wherein people lose sight of multiple identities and multiple causes and revert to dualistic points of perspective.[36] The State's renovation and enhanced military presence is the *wat* is one more example of how Thai Buddhism and its main actors have become political entities and targets.

Unlike the past, today's media and its globalized effects play an integral role in the interpretation of violence against monks. When a monk becomes

a victim of continual political violence, the media often ignores the local context of the conflict and represents it as one of nationalistic concern. A drug deal gone wrong becomes an organized attack of the Malay-Muslim insurgency. A personal revenge murder becomes the Muslim assassination of a monk. These narratives are accepted not only by international and national audiences, but also by locals such as the abbot at Wat Phromprasit. Not all southern monks accept this type of narrative, however.

At Wat Mailuu, one of the monks who served under the Queen's Project from Ang Thong in Central Thailand was extremely disturbed by the way in which the Thai media depicted the violence. Phra Kwāmsūk arrived at Wat Mailuu in 2004 and maintained a light-hearted disposition throughout his time there and was known for his dry humor and warm smile. Unlike the other volunteer monks who came and left, Phra Kwāmsūk stayed after his first post ended, and participated in daily chores such as sweeping the *wat* grounds every morning. He was sixty-six years old, and considered himself affiliated with the Thammakai, a commercially powerful transnational Buddhist organization with sixty centers in over twenty-nine countries. The Thammakai also had a center in Pattani province. Phra Kwāmsūk was especially upset about the coverage of a recent murder of monks in the nearby district of Maikǽn. Generally a very genial and light-hearted man, his eyes narrowed and his voice dropped as he explained how he saw the problem:

> They said that Muslims killed the monks [at a *wat*]. But no. The people who [killed the monks] were people who sold drugs. The monks couldn't pay and delayed payment many times. This was why the monks were killed when they went out to collect alms. That was the original background for when they talked about how people cut monks' heads off and all. But then people say the Muslims killed the monks and so on. Then the story explodes into a bigger deal. We only blame them [the Muslims], we don't blame ourselves.[37]

According to this Phra Kwāmsūk, the murder of monks in the district of Maikǽn was not politically motivated, but was prompted by a local drug conflict instead.[38] The monks were unable to pay for the drugs they were buying from local drug dealers. But, because they are politicized Buddhist representations in a conflict zone, their deaths became much greater than a local drug dispute. It became part of the much larger narrative about separatism and the nation-state and, consequently, about the vitality of Thai Buddhism.

The implicit danger in attributing religious significance to violence is that it creates a new and uncompromising motive. Mark Juergensmeyer argues that religious violence alters one's view of conflict, raising it from a mundane issue of money or power to one of cosmic relevance. By transposing the conflict onto a divine stage, people become actors in a cause far

greater than themselves. Killing a monk who represents the Thai nation and Buddhism itself catalyzes such a cosmic perspective. The conflict in southern Thailand is no longer about ending the separatist movement or quelling the violence, but about preserving Buddhism, a far greater motive than any monetary reason. It also is a much stronger motive.

The militant targeting of Buddhist monks is a recent phenomenon in the southernmost provinces. In an interview with Human Rights Watch, the abbot of a *wat* in the capital district of Yala reflected on the recent change:

> These militants are clearly different from their predecessors. Three decades ago, there were many separatist militants active in Yala's mountainous areas. But they never hurt Buddhist monks or innocent people. The new generation of militants is more ruthless. . . . Muslim youths around this temple show no respect to me and other monks. They spit at us, or point their feet at us [a sign of disrespect]. They say Buddhists are oppressors. . . . It is very much different from before when Buddhists and Muslims lived side by side.[39]

The recent shift to targeting monks has provoked intense reactions among Thai Buddhists. Buddhist monks living in Wat Phromprasit's district of Panāre remain emotionally charged and feel that the police and soldiers are too soft on the militants.[40] State officials now carry out acts of religious vengeance. One of the most prevalent groups to display such a mentality is the national police whose members usually hail from central and northern Thai provinces, such as the police at the My Garden Hotel. Police and soldiers in the southernmost provinces find that they do not merely uphold order. They also protect the sacred and avenge the nation. The defacement of monks escalates the conflict in Southern Thailand to one of cosmic relevance. Police officers and soldiers do not merely serve the State; rather, they protect the integrity of Thai Buddhism. The rise in ethno-religious tensions also has given way to Thai Buddhist vigilante squads.[41]

Murdering monks may be personally or politically motivated, but either motive results in local and national rage. It is through the defacement of these sacred representations that a conflict transcends from mundane matters to divine wars of unholy acts and exalted retributions.

## CONCLUSION

There is a rich discourse elucidating the ways in which contemporary religion is re-infused into politics. In the case of southern Thailand, *we find the opposite:* the State's politicization of monks is altering religious activism in southern Thailand into a militant form.

In southern Thailand one social by-product of politicized violence is the dualistic or Manichean mentality that eliminates secular associations.

Buddhist Pattani locals no longer recognize an unfamiliar woman wearing a *tudung* riding public transportation as a local, female, or Thai.[42] Instead, she is simply a Muslim—and further, a potential threat. This is an unfortunate result of living in an environment saturated with fear. Living in a violent climate robs people of their subjectival fluidity, or, as Amartya Sen explains, their plural identities. Pervasive and mounting fear leads people to view those around them as being on one side of a set of growing and fractious binary opposition; in a global context people are either capitalists or communists, colonizers or colonized, Buddhists or Muslims.

It is in this politicized context that the monk has the potential to make his greatest social impact: being murdered. When a monk is murdered, Thai Buddhism and Thai nationalism become defaced. Taussig's metaphor of 'atom splicing' the sacred becomes apropos here. By killing a Buddhist monk, the attackers expose the full force of what the monk represents—the overlapping dimensions of religion and politics, and propels the Thai national religion toward a militant direction.

The genesis for this dangerous valence is attainable through the three previously discussed elements: the defacement of the politicized sacred in a conflict zone, or in this particular case, the murdering of a Southern Buddhist monk.

A very recent illustration of this fact is the international attention to Myanmar. After over forty-five years of a dictatorship and consistent violations of human rights, the world became attentive to the atrocities during a public uprising against the Burmese junta in September, 2007. As monks took to the streets protesting junta rule and rallying tens of thousands of civilians to their cause, they created a site of conflict in and around Rangoon. But, it was not the 100,000 protesters that made the junta's army commanders abandon their posts, nor the Burmese students that caught the international media's eye. Rather, it was the Burmese Buddhist monks and what they symbolized—pious men of peace—and the State violence visited upon them.[43]

This international attention is not unique. Another memorialized event came from the self-immolation of Vietnamese Buddhist monks during the US war in Vietnam. Thich Quang Duc's self-immolation in a busy intersection of Saigon became a lasting symbol of resistance to the US backed South Vietnamese regime. His, as well as other public violent deaths of Buddhist monks such as the recent self-immolations of Tibetan lamas and nuns, unleash the full power of their symbolism.[44]

Whereas Burmese monks used their symbolic capital to refute the legitimacy of the junta, such as the refusal of Burmese military donations, the Thai monks' symbolic capital is invested in the legitimacy of the Thai State. This convergence of Thai sacrality and governance is part of an ideological legacy in Indian Buddhism, which stretches beyond the borders of Thailand to the nascent beginnings of Buddhism in South Asia.

There are varying circumstances and situations in which the power of a Buddhist monk's representation is unleashed. For each scenario described,

the murdering of Buddhist monks occurred in a conflict area. It is through the politicizing of these monks and their eventual defacement that fuels a muscular form of Buddhism, which in the end, signals a path toward militant religion.

## NOTES

1. For the purposes of this essay, the issue of militancy will refer to the process that invests social, economic and political responsibilities in military institutions and values. I draw this definition from Peace Educator Betty Reardon's work on peace education in *Militarization, Security, and Peace Education: A Guide for Concerned Citizens* (Valley Forge: United Ministries in Education, 1982), 3.
2. R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000).
3. See Maurice Bloch, *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
4. Perhaps the most concise source on Girard's theory of scapegoating is in the edited volume by Robert G. Hammerton-Kelly, *Violent Origins: Walter Burkert, Rene Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987). See also the mention of Girard's theories in the Introduction to the present volume by Vladimir Tikhonov.
5. See Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
6. Although discussed by different theorists, one of the best treatments of systemic pathologies and their relation to religious violence is by Jean Baudrillard in *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, translated by James Benedict (London & New York: Verso, 1993).
7. This essay draws from a larger discussion of the violence in southern Thailand in *Buddhist Fury: Religion and Violence in Southern Thailand* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
8. One defining characteristic for secular governments is the legal sequestering of religiosity to the private sphere. While Thailand officially maintains its platform as a secular country, its allowance of *shar'ia* in Muslim-dominated provinces and the intermingling of Buddhist ecclesiastical departments with its central governmental departments provide ample justification to critique this platform.
9. Personal communication and observations on July 29 and 30, 2004, in the capital district of Pattani province.
10. Personal communication through electronic mail with Srisompob Jitpiromsri, Political Science professor at Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani on February 5, 2008. The asterisks indicate changes that I have made to Srisompob's statistics. Srisompob did not have any attacks on *wat* recorded for 2007; however, on one occasion to I witnessed an attack on a *wat* in Pattani province during the Chinese New Year, February 18, 2007. In January 2010, Srisompob released new statistics and disclosed 23 monastic casualties. Srisompob Jitpiromsri, "Sixth Year of the Southern Fire: Dynamics of Insurgency and Formation of the New Imagined Violence," *Deep South Watch* (Prince of Songkhla University: Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity, 2010): 1–24, 15.
11. I also suspect that as the militant control over the three provinces has increased made it more difficult to cover and report incidents.

12. Amnesty and the International Crisis Group argue that the precedence for structural violence and disregard for human rights began before martial law with the Thai State's "war on drugs" in the southernmost provinces. However, violence and human rights' abuses result from influences other than drugs. One of these is the murdering of monks. For an example of the recent state-sanctioned abuses, see "No One Is Safe: Insurgent Violence against Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces," *Human Rights Watch Report* 19.13C (August 2007): 1–102 at 38–47. Anthropologist Amporn Mardent offers local accounts of state brutalities in "From Adek to Mo'ji: Identities and Social Realities of Southern Thai People," *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, accessed at http://kyotoreviewsea.org/Amporn.htm on September 30, 2006. Reports such as Rungrawee C. Pinyorat's "Thai Buddhist Vigilante Squads Suspected," *Associated Press,* 7 (August 20, 2007) show how local Buddhists take violence into their own hands, rather than leaving it to State officials.
13. Wassana Nanuam and Yuwadee Tunyasiri, "Curfew May Be Imposed; 12 Arrested," *Bangkok Post,* January 28, 2004.
14. Journalists and locals estimate Thais United to have over 6,000 members. For a discussion of Buddhist militia and Ruam Thai, see Duncan McCargo, *Tearing Apart the Land: Islam and Legitimacy in Southern Thailand* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 125–126.
15. In this context, the simulacra would be the representation of the Buddhist monk, which Thai society (and the greater society of the world) perceives and relies upon more heavily than the actual thing in itself. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1994).
16. Pierre Bourdieu's term 'symbolic capital' is applicable for describing how one can become (and thereby embody the capital of) the job they perform. Pierre Bourdieu defines symbolic capital as, "nothing more than economic or cultural capital which is acknowledged and recognized, when it is acknowledged in accordance with the categories of perception that it imposes, the symbolic power relations tend to reproduce and to reinforce the power relations which constitute the structure of the social space." Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words*: *Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 135.
17. The Sangha stands as the proximate exemplar and symbolic center of Buddhism; the monk stands as the apex of the Thai religious *and* social order. Further, the monk defines the upper limit of the human dimension of the Buddhist moral hierarchy. "Complexities in the Thai Religious System: An Interpretation," *Journal of Asian Studies* 37:2 (February 1977): 241–266, 248.
18. Here, and throughout this chapter, the term awakening is used instead of enlightenment, following Richard Cohen's argument (and that of many others, including his teacher Luis Gómez) that the correct translation of the Sanskrit verbal root *budh-* from which we get *buddha-* is "to wake up," and that the term enlightenment comes from a specific European intellectual context from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Richard Cohen, *Beyond Enlightenment: Buddhism, Religion, Modernity* (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), 1 and 9.
19. While Buddhist laity see monks as fields-of-merit, the term is not often applied (Pāli: *puññakkhetta,* Thai: *nā bun*). Stanley Tambiah notes, "The layman, by giving material gifts, expects to accumulate merit in the form of ethical energy; the monk in turn in accepting these gifts confers merit on the donor." *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-east Thailand*, (Cambridge, London, New York & Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 213.

20. Krishan Kumar and Ekaterina Makarova, "An Interview with José Casanova," *The Hedgehog Review* 4/2 (Summer, 2002): 91–108, reprinted in *Global studies* 1, ed. Giles Gunn (Dubuque, IO: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2003), 36.
21. "Bulls in China Shop Tend to Cause Havoc," *Bangkok Post,* January 28, 2004.
22. Kunsiri Olarikkachat, "Queen again calls for peace in South: Inhumane cruelties must be condemned," *Bangkok Post,* August 12, 2005.
23. W. K. Che Man estimated that over 100,000 Thai Buddhists relocated to the southernmost provinces in order to receive land grants from the Self-Help Colony program. *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 38.
24. Wat Mailuu is a pseudonym for one of the *wat* I frequented intermittently between September 2006 and October 2008. Thai: *khao kah bokna bokwā hai rawang wā khao mī čhudprasong thī thamhai prathai 'yū maidai thamhai khonthai khād thī phung lāeo ōkčhāk phūn thī pai lāeo bokwā rao khuantham 'yāngrai thungčha plotphay čhāk phukkhao lāeokhao kaw haidū phāp phra thī don thamrāi*. Personal communication with a volunteer monk at Wat Mailuu, 2007.
25. "Monks Head to South to Spread Message of Peace," *The Nation,* July 26, 2007.
26. Personal communication with Nopparat Benjawatthananant, director of the Office of National Buddhism, in Nakhon Pathom on December 25, 2006.
27. Abdulloh Benyakaj, "Scarecrows Carry Mean Message for Thaksin," *Bangkok Post*, November 4, 2005.
28. Thai: *thī čhring maidai tangčhai čhamājam phansā pho mā yīayam thān tāe maimī khrai 'yū čham phansā than čhung chūanmā čham wat thī nī āmmā wāng 'yū čhung dai mī ōkāt mā tang thī pīnī phra tīnōn tangčhai hai rīan parinyātrī to tāe tān kho rong lae thī nī nāsongsān maimī phra lōei tadsinčhai 'yū pen phūan lūangpho thān yāt yōm rao nāsongsān khao yāktambun kaw maimī phra mūa rao dai buat nai phra phuththasāt nā rao kaw tong pen thī pung thāngčhai pen nūanābun thū pen bun kusan lae maisīachāt kōet nī khū nai čhidčhai thī yākmā lae thī čhring kaw mai lēo rāi mūan nai sū mai klōemā 'yū thī nī lāi wan lāeo mai hen mī aria lōei phīang khāe khao maihai ōkpai nok wat phraowā mī muslim ye phūakkhao čhongwā rāo tāngsāsnākan rao mai penhā kab khao tāe khao mong rao pen satrū*. Personal communication with a volunteer monk at *Wat Mailuu* in 2007.
29. "148 Buddhist Monks Deployed to Temples in Deep South," *The Nation,* July 3, 2009.
30. "Monk, Temple Boys Killed in Pattani," *Bangkok Post,* October 16, 2005.
31. "Buddhist Temple Attacked," *The Nation*, October 16, 2005.
32. Personal communication with Pattani Thai-Chinese, Thai Buddhist and Malay locals in September 2006.
33. Michael Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 1.
34. Anand Panyarachun et. al., "Report of the National Reconciliation Commission: Overcoming Violence through the Power of Reconciliation," 53. Unofficial translation accessed at http://thailand.ahrchk.net/docs/nrc_report_en.pdf on August 15, 2006.
35. Personal communication with the abbot of *wat* Phromprasit, Panāre Pattani on December 26, 2006.
36. When I asked the abbot about these other factors, the abbot compared the southern violence to the US war on "Islamic terrorism" and explained that

President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra were fighting the same fight against extreme Muslims.

37. Personal communication with Phra Kwāmsūk at Wat Mailuu, 2006.
38. There are a few national reports on Buddhist monk using drugs. For an example, Sanitsuda Ekachai's "The Booze is Part of General Decline," *Bangkok Post*, March 29, 2001.
39. "No One Is Safe, Insurgent Violence against Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces," *Human Rights Watch* 19:13C (August 2007): 1–102, 66–67.
40. A monk living in Panāre told Human Rights Watch, "They should be tough in dealing with Muslim militants, otherwise soon there will be no Buddhists left here in Pattani and other southern provinces. There used to be 20 Buddhist monks in my temple. After Pra Kaeo was killed most of them have packed up and gone." "No One Is Safe, Insurgent Violence against Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces," *Human Rights Watch* 19:13(C) (August 2007): 1–102, 68.
41. Rungrawee C. Pinyorat, "Thai Buddhist Vigilante Squads Suspected," *Associated Press,* August 7, 2007.
42. A *tudung* is a Malay Muslim headdress for women.
43. Buddhist monks helped galvanize nearly 100,000 laity in a public display of defiance to the military overlords. For many of the Burmese, it was what the monks symbolized that made their participation significant. When the junta applied violence against the Buddhist monks, it was as if the junta had struck at the very heart of the resistance. According to the Associated Press, "The corralling of monks was a serious blow. They carry high moral authority in this predominantly Buddhist nation of 54 million people and the protests had mushroomed when the clergymen joined in. 'The monks are the ones who give us courage. I don't think that we have any more hope to win,' said a young woman who had taken part in a huge demonstration Thursday that broke up when troops shot protesters." "Troops Take Back Control of Myanmar," *Associated Press*, September 29, 2007. Attacking Buddhist monks and what they symbolize also divided support within the junta. High level army officials abandoned their posts, refusing to attack the monks, and the junta's premier family fled to Laos. "Army Major Defects from Burma," *Bangkok Post,* October 4, 2007; "Family of Burma's Super Boss are in Laos," *The Nation,* September 29, 2007. Meanwhile, the reverberations of murdering monks spread across the globe. Within hours the news was posted on websites and distributed on academic listservs. One website posted a note concerning the attacks on the Burmese monks from the day before, September 28, ending with a plea to spread news of this atrocity: "The head monk of the monastery, was tied up in the middle of the monastery, tortured, bludgeoned, and later died the same day, today. . . . When all is done, only 10 out of 200 [monks] remained alive, hiding in the monastery. Blood stained everywhere on the walls and floors of the monastery. Please tell your audience of the full extent of the fate of the monks please please !!!!!!!!!!!! *'Arrested' is not enough expression. They have been bludgeoned to death !!!!!!* (Name withheld to protect the identity)," (italics inserted) from "Peace March for Burma," accessed at http://sfbay.craigslist.org/sfc/act/435154521.html on September 29, 2007.
44. As of April 2012, 38 Tibetan lamas and nuns have set themselves on fire. See the collection of essays edited by Carole McGranahan and and Ralph Litzinger in *Cultural Anthropology,* "Self-Immolation as Protest in Tibet." (Special Edition, April 9, 2012). Last modified on April 9, 2012. http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/526.

45. One legend underscores the importance of the Buddhist monk's body and how the violence attributed it sacred properties: "Following his death, Thich Quang Duc was cremated and legend has it that his heart would not burn. As a result, his heart is considered Holy and is in the custody of the Reserve Bank of Vietnam." "Self Immolation," accessed at http://www.buddhistinformation.com/self_immolation.htm on September 30, 2007.

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# 5 Canonical Ambiguity and Differential Practices

## Buddhism and Militarism in Contemporary Sri Lanka

*Iselin Frydenlund*

### NON-VIOLENCE AS NORMATIVE DISCOURSE

Buddhism is often perceived as a philosophy that emphasizes worldly renunciation and non-violence. In this respect it is often placed in sharp contrast to the social activism and just-war orientation of Western and Middle Eastern religions like Christianity and Islam. The precept of abstaining from taking life is often referred to, by Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, as one of the key concepts of Buddhism. In particular, the supposedly non-violent resistance of the Dalai Lama against Chinese occupation has contributed to a widespread understanding of Buddhism as non-violent. Also, Japanese post-Second World War peace movements have promulgated Buddhism as a tool for world peace. Given this strong identification of Buddhism with peace and non-violence, the question evidently arises: how do Buddhists relate to violence and military conflict in the societies in which they live? Throughout history and across different Buddhist cultures, Buddhist monks have played a central role as preservers of the Buddha's teachings. Given their prominent role as religious teachers and religious *exemplars,* how do Buddhist monks relate to times of conflict? How are their lives affected by a war situation? The case of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka is particularly interesting, as the country has suffered from continuous violence over the last three decades. Since the outbreak of the military conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of Sri Lanka, Buddhist monks have actively participated in public debates about the conflict and its possible solutions. Why, in fact, have the Buddhist monks favored a military solution to the conflict with the LTTE, and how can we, based on the Sri Lankan case, engage in a critical discussion about Buddhism and violence?

The very theme of 'Buddhism and militarism' belongs to the now vast academic field of 'religion and violence.' The category of violence is large and highly complex, but my concern here is with warfare and militarism, i.e., the belief that a country should have great military strength in order to be powerful. What we should be aware of, however, is the prevalent secularist and humanist assumption that religion should be different from

violence, and even politics. In my view, this is particularly pertinent in the case of Buddhism since the principle of non-violence is perceived as fundamental to its teachings. Based upon field material gathered from 2004 to 2006, years when Sri Lanka went from the moderate optimism of peace talks to full-scale war, I shall argue that violence cannot be dismissed as un-Buddhist. Here I am indebted to Ananda Abeysekara's book *Colors of the robe: religion, identity, and difference*, and his concern for shifting monastic identities and violence in Buddhist Sri Lanka: what is regarded as 'violence' and 'religion' (Buddhism) is discursively produced at certain points in history.[1] Inspired by post-modernist perspectives, Abeysekara understands religion as a discursive strategy; an idea that is subject to shifting interpretations and polemical debates. However, in my view, his radical anti-essentialist and particularist position leaves 'Buddhism' as an entirely open category, which does not provide further insight into the particular *ways* that Buddhist traditions deal with violence and war. In the following, I shall discuss certain aspects of Buddhist monks' views and practices in war-time in Sri Lanka, which I suggest, indicate certain particularities of the Therāvada tradition of Sri Lanka, in relation to war.

In Sri Lanka today, the normative discourse on issues relating to violence and Buddhism is that of non-violence. With a few exceptions, to which I shall return, the majority of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka would hesitate to argue that violence has a place in Buddhism. However, that normative discourse, which is justified by reference to canonical texts, stands in contrast to the hegemonic militaristic position found within the Buddhist monastic order, the Sangha. This ambiguity is clearly illustrated in the works and engagement of the now late Ven. Madhie Pannasiha. Pannasiha, one of the most prominent monks in post-independent Sri Lanka and a leading voice of Buddhist modernism, argued that:

> Buddhism, more than any other religion, has indeed contributed most towards promoting world peace. It is the teaching of tolerance and love. It is also the doctrine of cause and effect. It places causality in a position of supreme importance within its Teaching. Without prior elimination of the cause, the effect or result cannot be nullified. If it is possible to get rid of the underlying cause, or causes that lead to war, peace becomes spontaneous. This is due to the fact that peace is diametrically opposed to war. Greed, envy and anger are the prime motives for armed hostility.[2]

Pannasiha clearly engages Buddhist concepts to explain conflict; the three 'unwholesome actions' (*akusaladhamma*) of greed, envy and anger constitute the explanatory model for conflict.[3] These 'unwholesome actions' are the prime cause that has to be eliminated. Here we get to the point in the heated political debate in Sri Lanka: what is the cause of the Tamil uprising?

Minority communities tend to explain the conflict in terms of state failure and Sinhala majoritarianism. By contrast, the dominant Sinhala discourse, including that of Buddhist monks, regards Tamil militancy in terms of 'terrorism' and that claims of a Tamil homeland are illegitimate.[4] Pannasiha, quoted earlier, was among the monks who since the 1950s worked for the 'restoration' of Buddhism through various state commissions[5], and against any concessions being made to minority ethnic communities. Through various monastic organizations and close ties to political elites, he engaged in activities to strengthen those forces that actively worked against Tamil separatism. For example, the Senanayake–Chelvanayagam Pact of 1965, which sought to grant protection to the Tamil language and Tamil land rights, was abandoned, having been opposed by leading *bhikkhus,* among them Pannasiha.[6] Moreover, Pannasiha held the position that though "Buddhism is essentially a non-violent religion, it is the duty of the leader to protect the country. We can't tell the president to go to war, but we can tell her to *protect* ( . . . ) the country."[7] Outright demands for war were generally deemed inappropriate for monks to make, but in significant ways Buddhist monks supported any state leader who in their view worked for the Sinhala Buddhist cause.

## MONASTIC RESISTANCE TO SRI LANKA'S FIFTH PEACE PROCESS

In fact, the normative discourse on non-violence stands in direct opposition to the hegemonic position of militarism found within the Sangha. In the following, I will outline monastic views on the last peace process (2000–2008) and present some of the rationale behind the wide acceptance of militarism, i.e., a military solution to the 'national issue' in Sri Lanka. At the national level, Buddhist monks voiced considerable hostility towards the Norwegian-facilitated peace process, because they feared that a political solution to the conflict would ultimately result in a division of Sri Lanka into two separate states. In the opinion of many monks, a decentralized political structure—for example, along federal lines—would contradict two basic tenets of Buddhism in Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka as a sacred land and the Sinhala people as the protectors of Buddhism. The issue at stake was none less than securing Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

No broad survey was conducted among Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka about their views on the peace process. In fact, we know relatively little about the political views of 'the average monk.' However, in 2004 one well-informed monk estimated that "the majority of the monks are suspicious about the peace process—let's say about 75 percent. They think that by negotiating peace the Sinhala people and Buddhism will be betrayed."[8] But why did these monks think that the peace process would betray Buddhism?

> Not one single monk is against peace. But, when at the negotiation table, we have to think again. It is unfortunate if the peace process goes down. It should proceed. But we do not want peace at any cost. We do not want a federal system, but devolution of power. . . . It is crucial to understand the difference between 'united,' which is when different states get into one state, and 'unitary,' one state. For example, the United States were separate states later united. In Sri Lanka, we never had separate states—we only have had Sri Lanka. Therefore, the state has to be unitary.[9]

This extract from an interview I had with one of Sri Lanka's most prominent monks sums up the concerns of the majority of Buddhist monks with regard to the peace process, namely, the spatial division of Sri Lanka. To them, the idea of a Tamil homeland—which, according to their view is a colonial construction—is unacceptable. Most of the monks favor a unitary state and are consequently skeptical towards a federal solution. While suspicion and criticism were widespread among the Sinhalese population in 2000 when the peace process was announced, the early days of the peace process also witnessed optimism and initiatives for peace activities throughout the country. In a similar fashion, the top hierarchy monks (*mahānayākas*), as well as other prominent monks (like for example Ven. Sobitha), were more moderate in their criticism that might have been expected from previous peace attempts in the 1980s and 1990s. On February 22, 2002, the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) was signed by both the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. The agreement was greeted with criticism by Sinhala nationalists, but was celebrated by the majority of the Sri Lankan population. Sri Lanka's leading monks, the *mahānayākas* also expressed their satisfaction with the ceasefire. However, the optimism surrounding the ceasefire diminished when LTTE leader Prabhakaran made a number of ambiguous statements on April 10, 2002, creating confusion about the extent to which the LTTE had given up its separatist claims. In response to Prabhakaran's statements, the leading monks of all the *nikāyas*[10] wrote a letter on April 18, 2002 to the then President Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and members of parliament, rejecting the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the government and the LTTE, arguing strongly against a de-proscription of the LTTE, and rejecting any federal solution or proposals of interim administration for the north and east of the country. In the eyes of the *mahānayākas*, the "peace process . . . is primarily aimed at the Establishment of Eelam rather than achieving real peace."[11] Moreover, the statement illustrates the particular religious nationalism so prevalent in postcolonial Sri Lanka:

> In these circumstances, the LTTE is not interested in peace but in the establishment of a powerful Tamil state within the territory of Sri Lanka. This will be inevitable unless we resist it with all our might.

> And the failure to prevent it will result in the subjugation of the majority race by the minority Tamils and the extermination of the Sinhala race and the Buddha Sasana from this island. It is therefore the bounden duty of every member of the Maha Sangha and lay people to do their utmost to prevent the designs of the Tamil terrorists from becoming Eelam a reality.

Although this statement, entitled 'The Ceasefire Agreement Rejected,' criticizes the peace process and communicates the *mahānāyakas*' deep concern over the possible division of the country, it was nonetheless less critical than previous statements, expressing the monks' 'deep commitment to peace' and further recognizing the rights of the Tamil people. Nonetheless, the 'soft' response of the *mahānāyakas* to the peace process was strongly challenged by other sections of the Sangha, mainly comprised of younger and more radically minded monks.

Importantly, neither Sinhala nationalist ideology nor 'patriotic movements' are identified with one particular political party, but rather cut across party structures. This means that the major political parties—the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the United National Party (UNP), and the People's Liberation Front (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, JVP)—had associated nationalist pressure groups, both monastic and lay. These groups were fluid, in the sense that members moved between various networks and political parties. Such organizational flexibility favored rapid mobilization when necessary. In addition, pressure groups fronted a more radical nationalist stance than was possible for political parties represented in parliament. This scenario changed, however, with the historic entry of Buddhist monks into parliament in 2004. Their party, the National Sinhala Heritage Party (Jathika Hela Urumaya, JHU), won surprisingly nine seats in parliament on a Buddhist revivalist and anti-negotiation ticket. Moreover, the JVP, which had been out of national politics since the state suppression of their insurgency in the late 1980s, did surprisingly well in the 2004 elections. Henceforth, radical Buddhist nationalists were represented in parliament as two separate political entities (not only as pressure groups within the major political parties), and by that they increased their roles in public political life.

When some monks became 'softer' in their response to the Norwegian-facilitated peace process, new 'extra-*nikāya*' organizations were formed within the Sangha. One of these organizations was the Jathika Sangha Sammelanaya (JSS), formed in May 2002. This was a forerunner to the JHU, and many of its members were later leading JHU figures. Their main aim was 'to protect the Buddha Sasanaya and stop the division of the country.'[12] The JSS was created as a direct response to, and protest against, the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two parties in the peace talks, and clearly illustrates the organizational initiatives made by Buddhist monks against peace talks with the LTTE. The JSS/JHU monks saw themselves as the only true defenders of the nation and Buddhism. In fact, together

with the National Movement Against Terrorism, it arranged protests outside the Norwegian embassy at which the Norwegian flag was burned. Moreover, at a meeting held in 2003, the Ven. Ellawela Medhananda, a senior archaeologist frequently on national television, went so far as to accuse the *mahānāyakas* of being "indifferent to the threat faced by the Country and the Sinhala Buddhists," adding that "if necessary, the Sangha Sammelanaya would not hesitate to appoint a Sangharaja to protect the Nation."[13] However, this 'extra-*nikaya*' organization cannot simply be explained as opposition to the Sangha establishment—which at the time was seen as being too soft on 'the national issue'—because some sections of the Sangha hierarchy in fact supported its cause. Indeed, several leading monks from Amarapura Nikāya participated at its meetings.

Between September 2002 and April 2003, six rounds of peace talks were held, but negotiations came to a halt when the LTTE withdrew from the talks in April 2003. On October 23, 2003, the LTTE's proposal for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) in the northeast of the country was submitted to the Sri Lankan government. Not surprisingly, most monks were critical towards the ISGA, on the grounds that it would lead to separation of the country. The Ven. Athuraliye Rathana, the JHU's parliamentary group leader, on a number of occasions stated that the JHU would oppose the ISGA proposals as the basis for future peace talks. This anti-ISGA stance was repeated in early October 2004, when the JHU refused to support a revival of the peace process through President Kumaratunga's newly established National Council on Peace and Reconciliation (NCPR) "since the talks would be based on the ISGA." Moreover, Medhananda, now the senior figure of the JHU, argued that the "only advice they could give the President was for her to annul the 'ceasefire agreement' and act according to Sri Lankan law."[14]

The moderate scepticism of the first years of the peace process was radicalized as a result of the strong criticism expressed in the media (including claims that too many concessions were made to the Tamils, or that the LTTE is simply using the CFA to build up its supply of arms). Moreover, it seems that the rather vague or ambiguous signals from the Sangha hierarchy regarding the peace process later opened up a space for radical voices outside the traditional hierarchy, such as the JHU. The UNP was elected on a strong pro-peace vote in 2001, but was voted out of office only three years later in the 2004 elections. In those elections, the two political parties most skeptical of the peace process, the JHU and the JVP, did surprisingly well. Although the UNP's poor election performance, in my view, was the result of not meeting people's social and economic grievances (though the economy did improve in the years following the signing of the CFA in 2002), effective anti-peace process campaigns in Sri Lanka also contributed to the election result.[15]

With the presidential election of November 2005 the political climate changed. President Mahinda Rajapaksa won the elections on an anti-

negotiation platform, and monastic pressure groups within the JVP, as well as the JHU, entered into an alliance with the president. In January 2007 the JHU, in fact, again made history when they accepted to join the Rajapaksa government. However, the monks in parliament hesitated to formally sit in government, indicating that the active 'work of kings' was deemed inappropriate for monks, so they handed over the ministerial seat to the lay activist Champika Ranawaka, who had been crucial in the organization of the JHU in 2004. A new peace initiative was taken in 2006 in Geneva, with little result. Again, Sinhala nationalist parties and Buddhist pressure groups, including the JHU, opposed these talks. The war intensified in 2006, and in 2008 the government formally withdrew from the peace talks. The JHU continued its support for a military solution to the conflict throughout the war, and in 2008 the JHU secretary Ven. Omalpe Sobitha even stated that "the Maha Sangha has the power to order the Government not to take backward the step taken forward to eradicate terrorism."[16] Moreover, in April 2009, only three weeks before the fall of the LTTE leadership, the JHU staged a protest outside of the British High Commission in Colombo against the arrival of the British Foreign Secretary and the French Foreign Minister who arrived in Sri Lanka to discuss the humanitarian situation in northern Sri Lanka and push for a ceasefire.[17] At this point, the army was engaged in a full-scale war in the north, which had severe consequences for hundreds of thousands of Tamil civilians.[18]

## JUST WAR IDEOLOGY

An issue of considerable concern for many Buddhist monks skeptical of the peace process was how to define 'conflict,' 'peace,' and the 'peace process.' All Buddhist monks ultimately want peace, and many resented being labelled 'anti-peace monks'—a common allegation against them made by local peace movements, by the LTTE, or by international media—because they were against a federal solution, or the way the peace process was run by the political leaders, or by Norway. Nonetheless, a common position was that the core of the problem was in fact terrorism, for which dividing the country was not an appropriate remedy. Indeed, if the country was to be divided, it was believed that an internal war would break out.[19] Several monks in the JHU as well as other nationalist Buddhists monks argued that the only way to bring peace to Sri Lanka would be to bring the LTTE down militarily and then establish a dialogue.[20]

If we take as a starting point the idea that Sri Lanka and Buddhism are seen as under threat, this may resemble Christian or Islamic ideas on the justified use of force ('just war ideology'). The concept of 'just war theory' is a general term in the Western Christian context for ideas that justify and limit war. The term is imprecise, however, as it has changed over time, it has given rise to numerous theories and people from various academic and

professional positions use the term differently. Nonetheless, James Turner Johnson argues that beneath this great variety, certain general ideas exist, so that the term not only covers a *tradition*, but also a *theory*. These ideas relate to the right to legitimately make war (*jus ad bellum*) and the law of war (*jus in bello*).[21] It is beyond the scope of this study to give a detailed analysis of the origins of Christian just war theory or its historical developments, but it should be noted that the pacifism of the early Christian church has been questioned, and that their negative orientation towards militarism was more the result of the early Church's eschatological elements and its subsequent withdrawal from politics rather than upon repugnance for violence itself.[22] Anyway, when the early Christians gave up the expectations of a new age, they became more 'world-affirming' and accepted to a larger degree than before the existence of the state. In sum, the just war doctrine grew out of the need to reconcile Christian beliefs with the states' need for armed force, and today, a wide range of positions along the pacifist—just war continuum exists within the global Christian church.

Yet, such an approach of 'just war' may seem far more problematic within Buddhist ethics than within Christian and Islamic[23] contexts, since Buddhist canonical texts are thought to present pacifism (based on the principle of non-violence, *ahiṃsā*), a view widely held by Buddhists and Buddhist scholars.[24] In September 2002, the Ven. Bellanwila, one of Sri Lanka's most important monks, presented a paper at a conference arranged by the Norwegian Buddhist Association in Oslo. He emphasized that 'just war' was an oxymoron, and that under no circumstances is war justifiable on Buddhist grounds. However, Ven. Bellanwila admitted the possibility that war is unavoidable under certain circumstances. The question of unavoidability is of major concern here. If Sri Lanka and Buddhism are perceived to be under threat, is violence then unavoidable? The actions, discussed earlier, taken by monks against the peace process indicate that during the Tamil uprising violence was deemed unavoidable by the great majority of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka. It is therefore interesting to note how a Buddhist just war ideology has developed in Sri Lanka, in spite of Bellanwila's claims. Based on particular interpretations of a Buddhist chronicle from the fifth century AD, the *Mahāvaṃsa*, it is argued that in *certain* cases violence may be permissible. As the civil war continued in Sri Lanka, this 'Buddhist utilitarianism' developed and gained prominence. Therefore, the Buddhist concept of non-violence, so often defined as absolute, 'can with equal validity be regarded as a *prima facie* duty.'[25] This implies that the duty of non-violence can be overruled in times when Buddhism is perceived to be in peril. Nevertheless, in my experience it is far more difficult to discuss the use of force with Buddhist monks than with, say, Sri Lankan Catholic clerics (particularly since Christianity has an elaborate just war tradition). As non-violence is the hegemonic discourse in Buddhist Sri Lanka, outright demands by Buddhist monks for a military solution were seen as problematic, by monks as well as laypeople. Therefore, important monks suggested

that they preferred to ask the government to *protect* the country, which usually implied support for military action against the LTTE.[26]

Even though 'Buddhism as non-violence' was the normative view on Buddhism and violence, other monks were more straightforward in their demand for a military solution. For example, according to Ven. Rathana of the JHU, terrorism had to be eradicated by military means. With a clear reference to the Buddhist tradition, he stated that

> There are two central concepts of Buddhism: compassion (*maitriya*) and wisdom. If compassion was a necessary and sufficient condition, then the Buddha would not have elaborated on wisdom or *prajna*. Hitler could not have been overcome by *maitriya* alone. Today there is a discourse about peace in Sri Lanka. It is an extremely artificial exercise and one that is clearly being orchestrated under the threat of terrorist attack.[27]

In contrast, however, to monks like Pannasiha, or Bellanwila, Rathana in fact applies Buddhist doctrinal concepts for justifications of the use of armed force. To him, compassion (in this case non-violence) needs to be complemented (or overruled) by wisdom, understood as the use of armed force. Rathana, together with other militant monks like Ven. Elle Gunawansa, belongs to a monastic minority where the normative discourse of non-violence is set aside.

## DIFFERENTIAL PRACTICES: MONKS AND THE MILITARY

Soldiers in Sri Lanka have been asking for divine protection in war for centuries, for example at the shrine of the warrior god Skanda in Kataragama.[28] One could argue that powerful gods in the Buddhist pantheon[29] are appropriated when needed, but that this religious practice is somewhat separated from the 'pure' Buddhism as practised at the *stupas* and the monasteries. In contemporary Sri Lanka 'Buddhism' is referred to as *buddhāgama*,[30] but in addition to *buddhāgama*, Sinhala Buddhists adhere to a 'spirit religion,' which includes the worship of gods, invocation of demons, and the belief in manipulation of supernatural powers.[31] However, religious activities associated with *buddhāgama,* also take place in relation to the military. This in turn questions the position of many scholars, among them the famous Sri Lankan anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere, who wrote that

> Even in the most violent periods of Buddhist history it would be hard, though not impossible, for a monk or layman to pray at a Buddhist shrine for success in war and impossible for a person to do so with a gun in hand, even now when considerable redefinition of Buddhist values is taking place.[32]

In academic discussions on Buddhism and violence in Sri Lanka there is a tendency to separate 'doctrinal Buddhism' from Buddhist history and to argue that the former is absolutely non-violent, while the latter provide charters for ethnic violence. However, based on field observations and interviews with monks in Sri Lanka from 2004 to 2006, I would challenge the notion that 'doctrinal Buddhism,' however defined, cannot be associated with war-activities. Although soldiers may not pray to the Buddha for military success, there are other practices that function in similar ways, as when Buddhist ritual practices bestow spiritual protection on the army and its soldiers. In the following, I shall discuss several aspects of Buddhist monks' relations with the Sri Lankan military, which in fact, cover a wide range of Buddhist practices, which in my view, cannot be separated from doctrinal Theravāda Buddhism.

## MONKS AND ARMY: RECIPROCAL PROTECTION

> *We were guided by the monk through one of the sleeping halls of the orphanage, passing a hall where a spotless white car of the latest model was parked, to the monk's spacious office. On the left hand side an enormous wooden desk served as working place when he carried out his many administrative duties. At the far end of the 'hall', an elegant, dark-wooden sitting arrangement invited for informal meetings and the serving of tea. The room was decorated with more than 30 pictures of the lay supporters of the temple: all were army officers and their wives. Twice during the interview we were interrupted by phone calls from army officers at the nearby air base. They wanted to make arrangements for the next poya day activities, the monk explained.*[33]

This small field observation from a temple in northern Sri Lanka provides us with information that is not obtained through textual analysis of Pāli texts, statements made by monks on the Sri Lankan civil war, or even through interviews. What this brief observation reveals is the daily workings between monks and the army. The army officers were the prime supporters of the temple, and the monk, in turn, served the religious needs of the army personnel. This temple thrived under the protection of the air base, while at the same time being a locus for lay generosity to the Sangha. The incumbent monk told me that in war times the soldiers flocked to his temple, as it was located next to an air base, but that they had stopped coming after the ceasefire (as many soldiers were on leave). Ironically, perhaps, this Buddhist temple was to a large extent *dependent* upon war activities for its survival.

In a region affected by war, one very obvious element of relations between monks and the army is that of individual security and protection. Monks I interviewed in the war-affected regions in the north and east of Sri Lanka in 2005 and 2006 were often in need of being protected by the army (or police, or home guards) against threats from Tamil militant groups. Monks caught

up in fighting in the districts of Vavuniya, Trincomalee, and Ampara related how the army had come to their rescue when their temple and the village had been attacked by the LTTE, or caught up in crossfire. For example, in some cases injured monks were flown in military helicopters from the temple site to the military hospital in Colombo, where they stayed for treatment. Not surprisingly, these monks expressed their gratitude towards the military for their rescue and developed close relations to nearby military camps.[34] Another element of protection came to the fore when monks had to flee historical temples or sites, which were sometimes located within the war zone. For example, in the case of the ruins of Tiriay, north of Trincomalee, the only way the monks could get access to this temple complex was through army convoys.[35] These cases were few, but it clearly adds to the overall picture of close co-operation in the war-zone between the army and monks. What has been more frequent, however, is a process by which Buddhist monks have discovered Buddhist ruins either in jungles or in areas now populated by Muslims or Hindus and later developed these ruins into modern Buddhist sites of worship, or at least into sites of a perceived great past. In the war-affected regions in Sri Lanka, territories are contested for, and minority populations (Tamils as well as Muslims[36]) have felt the presence of Buddhist monks as a threat to what they perceive as their land. Buddhist monks, however, perceive these lands as Buddhist, and in their view, archaeological remains in these areas testify not only to a Buddhist past, but also to a *Sinhala Buddhist* past. In this context of territorial contest, monks have received protection of these sites by the police and the army, further strengthening relations between monks and the army.

Also, Buddhist monks in the minority-dominated regions in the north and east were perceived as individuals safe to the state, and hence the army. I base this argument upon mere field observations; the monks' shaved heads and saffron robes made them visible in the crowd, when moving in and out of government-controlled high security zones, passing through checkpoints, or in some rare cases, crossing the border into LTTE territory. The Buddhist monks, I suggest, are seen as individuals safe to the state, if not as representatives of the state. I have never felt more secure at an army checkpoint than with a group of monks! Travelling to the international airport outside Colombo together with a Jaffna Tamil on the other hand, gave rise to far more concern about checkpoints due to the many attacks in public places by Tamil insurgents during the war. At other times in history, the saffron robe could signify resistance to the state, like for example in the south during the JVP insurrection.[37] However, as the conflict in the north and east follows ethnic and religious divides, Buddhist symbols are prime identifiers of 'Sinhalaness,' in contrast to other ethnic identities in these multi-ethnic areas. Security, then, at the level of the individual monk, as well as protection of temple property, were crucial elements in the connections between monks and the army.

Another component in the relationship between the Sri Lankan Armed Forces and Buddhist monks has to do with the religious composition of the army: The majority of the officers and the soldiers in the army are

Buddhists. Soldiers do not leave their religious identity behind when they enter the army, which means that they bring their Buddhism into army life. In contrast to many other armed forces, the Sri Lankan Army does not have a formal military chaplaincy, but monks residing in temples near army camps serve the religious needs of the soldiers and offer them spiritual guidance and protection. Here, we need to step back and briefly discuss what these 'religious needs' of the soldiers might be. The central institutional feature of traditional Theravāda Buddhism is the distinction between the laity and the Sangha, which is not one of separation, but of mutual dependency.[38] The role of the members of the Sangha is to strive for their own spiritual development (as expressed in the *arhat* ideal), and to use their knowledge of the *Dhamma* to guide laypeople. However, when Buddhism became an established religion, soon after the foundation of the Sangha, the monks (and nuns) abandoned much of its world-renouncing ideal, and thus the monks became literate ceremonial specialists *for* society.[39] These services include teaching, preaching (*baṇa*), the recitation of sacred texts (*paritta*)[40] and officiating at funerals. The role of the laity, including kings, is to provide material support for the Sangha. By supporting the Sangha, lay people acquire merit (*puñña*), which is crucial for a better rebirth. Merit is perceived as something substantial that can be accumulated, and it can be stored up by oneself for a better rebirth, it can be passed on to a dead relative for their future well-being, or to the gods in return for help in worldly matters. The Pāli term *dāna,* 'gift,' has acquired the meaning 'monk's meal,'[41] and refers to the practice of bringing food and gifts to the monks, or nuns, which is the main source of merit. In addition, one acquires *puñña* by listening to *baṇa* and *paritta*-chanting.

Buddhist monks carry out religious services for the soldiers in the same manner as Christian chaplains would serve soldiers of the Christian faith. Regardless of their political views on the peace process and the civil war, the monks I interviewed went to army camps on *poya* days, preached *baṇa* to the soldiers, or in other ways guided them spiritually. Individual regiments invited good preachers to their temples at special occasions, whether on *poya* days or on Regiment Day, which marks the day the Regiment was established. Moreover, specific functions were organized before large military operations, for example *paritta* recital for the protection of the army. One of the monks in Vavuniya told me that the soldiers used to come to his temple in the afternoons, to seek advice from the monk, or simply to relax in the temple area. The monk was concerned about the soldiers' mental health: "They are not mentally balanced! I try to comfort them, and sometimes I preach *baṇa*."[42] The purpose of military preaching was, according to the monks I interviewed, to console soldiers, who often showed concern about their future rebirth while carrying out violent acts on the battlefield.[43] This supports the view that emphasizes the non-violence of 'doctrinal Buddhism,' or more precisely Buddhist soteriology, and that this discourse has strong influence on ordinary Buddhist soldiers. This seems to indicate that

many soldiers do not feel that the war can be sanctioned by religion. However, monks such as Elle Gunavamsa, have been actively engaged in the recruitment of soldiers. In the early 2000s, the army faced problems with soldiers deserting in huge numbers. Gunawansa appealed to the soldiers to return to the army through him under a general amnesty. According to Gunawansa himself, he was instrumental in the return of more than 12,000 soldiers. In gratitude for the soldiers' sacrifice, he opened a disabled war heroes' vocational training centre at his Colombo temple.[44] Through Buddhist rituals, the use of his temple, and through the very fact that he is a Buddhist *exemplar* in his capacity as a monk, he contributes to specific Buddhist justifications for war. Although Gunawansa belongs to a monastic minority of militant monks, it should be noted that Buddhist monks in general were far more concerned with consoling individual soldiers, or reciting *paritta* verses for the protection of the army rather than questioning the very use of armed force. In fact, pacifism among monks is rare. In many ways war was accepted as a regrettable part of life in the world.

In addition to listening to *baṇa*, army personnel—in their capacity as ordinary lay Buddhists—carried out their ordinary religious duties in the areas where they were stationed. One such important lay activity is to offer *dāna* to the monks. In several of the temples I visited in the northern and eastern districts, Buddhists constituted the minority community, so the *dāna* offered by army and police personnel was in fact necessary for the monks' survival. As such, the army functioned as the monks' *dāyaka* communities.[45] This symbiotic relationship was most important in the cases where the temple did not have a *dāyaka* community in the nearby village, either because it was located in a forest area (attached to a recently discovered ruin), or if the temple was located next to a Tamil or a Muslim village. Now, when speaking to Muslim villagers in Ampara, or to Tamils in Trincomalee, members of the pre-war generation certainly would recall gestures of inter-religious co-operation. "In those days," some of these villagers recalled, "we used to bring *dāna* for the monks, or join in the Vesak processions when they passed through our village."[46] However, the war situation produced a deep ethnic-religious divide where 'inter-religious courtesy' was no longer frequent. Therefore, 'Buddhistness' is imbued with a sharper identity than before: being a Buddhist monk in these war-torn landscapes, indicated association with the Sinhala Buddhist-dominated state in its fight against Tamil insurgency.

## THE BUDDHIST ARMY ASSOCIATION AND ARMY BLESSINGS

If we move from the individual temple in the war-affected regions to the national level of the army, we find that the ties between the army and Buddhist monks are formalized through The Buddhist Army Association at Panagoda, in the Western Province. Panagoda is an arsenal and serves as

the regimental headquarters of many regiments of the Sri Lankan Army. On October 11, the anniversary of the founding of the Sri Lankan Army, a sermon is held at the military temple at Panagoda. Panagoda is visited by relatives of dead or wounded soldiers from all over Sri Lanka, and during special ceremonies Buddhist monks receive *dāna* and transfer merit (*puñña*) to dead soldiers. Moreover, throughout rural Sri Lanka, monks are important at military funerals in the ancestral village (*gama*) of the soldiers. In this context, rituals connected with Buddhist soteriology are interwoven with the social formations of the military.

Also, there are other practices carried out by Buddhist monks that explicitly sanction the use of military force. For example, it is a common practice for leading Buddhist monks in Colombo and Kandy to bless officers. Such events are widely covered in the Sinhala as well as in English media. On June 11, 2008, three months after a suicide attack on the then Commander of the Army General Sarath Fonseka—which he miraculously survived—Buddhist monks bestowed the blessings of the 'Triple Gem' on the General when he reassumed office. During this occasion, monks recited *paritta* and the general made offerings to the monks. Moreover, leading military personnel receive blessings in the shrine room of the Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy, the prime symbol of Buddhist political power, and Buddhist monks tie *pirit nul* (protective thread) around their wrists. Wearing *pirit nul* is a customary lay practice, but such rituals involving top generals are turned into special occasions—widely covered in the media, or at army websites—for protection in the battlefield. In my view, ritual interaction with military officers in a specific war context can hardly lead to any other conclusion than that the monks involved, coming from leading institutions and temples, accept (to a varying degree) the military actions of lay people, although they themselves do not involve themselves in such actions. Again, while Buddhist ritual practice interconnects with the individual religious life of the soldier, these practices also express symbolic support to the army in the public domain.

To conclude, I would like to stress the fact that the close association of soldiers and monks was not considered an issue of debate during the war. It was taken for granted that soldiers asked for protection or spiritual guidance—as any other lay person would do—and it was a matter of fact that monks blessed the army in its endeavor to protect the state. It is not uncommon for monks to decorate their temple offices and reception halls with pictures of themselves together with leading army generals. This brings to mind the story, told in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, of the general Sīha who declares (in the context of meat-eating) that he would not intentionally kill a living being. Interestingly, there is no indication that he found his duties as a soldier incompatible with the precept of non-violence. As pointed out by Schmithausen, "[T]he warrior is conceived as observing the Buddhist norms wherever they do not conflict with his specific duties as a warrior."[47] However, this statement needs qualification if it is to shed light upon the

contemporary situation in Sri Lanka. According to monks I interviewed, many soldiers *were* concerned with their moral standing on the battlefield and subsequently with their future rebirths. Again, outright justification for the use of violence was not readily given by the monks who consoled the soldiers. It should be noted, however, that very few monks questioned the existence of the armed forces *per se*.

Therefore, the Sri Lankan context is a case in point where Buddhism, through the majority of Buddhist monks, lends its legitimacy to state-organized violence. While individual monks might have clear views on Buddhism as non-violent, they nonetheless carry out their religious duties in a close relationship with state institutions, such as the army, as well as with politicians. As long as the state is conceived as legitimately Buddhist, or at least moving in that direction, they will support the state's use of military means.

## MONK SOLDIERS?

'Monk soldiers'—robed soldiers of the state—do not exist in contemporary Sri Lanka, as they, for example, do in Southern Thailand.[48] Here a conceptual clarification is needed between various forms of violence, war and militarism. According to the monastic code, the Vinaya, homicide is considered an offense which results in expulsion from the monastic order, while the killing of other living creatures is considered a minor offense. Importantly, the monastic code aims at separating the order from mundane activities, such as warfare, and it is explicitly stated that soldiers have to disrobe before they can enter the order. Thus, the Sangha is Sri Lanka, with a few exceptions, have *not* participated in warfare, carrying weapons themselves, and there is not a tradition for holy warriors. Nonetheless, as my material indicates, Buddhist monks are closely attached to military institutions. How shall we understand this against the monastic code? The monastic code regulates Sangha—army relations, but it should be noted that the Vinaya provides several exceptions to the rule so that monks can stay with an army if deemed *necessary*.[49] Thus, interaction between monks and army are not contrary to the monastic code. Nonetheless, we might argue, associating with the military should be considered an ethical dilemma for Buddhist monks, given Buddhism's strong ethos of non-violence, as well as the Vinaya-injunction against homicide. This leads to the question to what extent the Vinaya is a primary source for ethical norms. Clearly, *śīla* (morality) and the Vinaya are related, but the relationship between ethics and the code is a puzzle. The problem is that many Vinaya rules have no clear moral content. Rather, they express concerns of etiquette and proper conduct in the eyes of the laity.[50] In fact, although Vinaya regulations clearly prevented the existence of 'soldier-monks,' monastic contact with the military in itself was seldom discussed against the Vinaya, neither from an ethical nor a legal point of view.

Finally, recent history in Sri Lanka indicates that Vinaya regulations are set aside when deemed necessary. For example, during the JVP insurgency of the late 1980s monks were involved in carrying out violent acts. The violent conflict between the state and the insurgent JVP was one between peoples of same language and religion. The social protest of the JVP was expressed in a Sinhala nationalist and Buddhist idiom, where monks could take up the role of robed revolutionaries, against what they perceived as an un-Buddhist state. In comparison to the pre-colonial Buddhist kings, modern party politics increase the competitive space where different political parties can be said to represent 'true Buddhism.' Using violent means, both the state and the JVP monks fought for what they perceived as 'true Buddhism.' By contrast, in relation to the war between the state and the armed Tamil groups, the role of nationalist monks was to pressurise the state not to give any concessions to the ethnic minorities. In this political climate, the state, the army, and the police were political allies, and monks did not have to take up arms either against the state or against Tamil insurgents. Therefore, symbolic acts of support, like for example monks assisting the army by carrying boxes of military equipment, composing military hymns, or organising heated rallies against any political concessions to the LTTE, showed the commitment of militant monks. In some cases, some of the monks have also conducted fasts-unto-death. Being a militant monk in contemporary Sri Lanka then, is not a matter of taking up arms, but of vociferously supporting a military solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflicts. This leads to the question of where to locate violence in relation to Buddhism: does it exist outside or inside the Buddhist traditions? Do the foundations of Buddhism forbid all violence, or do they allow space for violence? I will conclude this chapter by presenting different approaches to Buddhism and violence.

## 'DEGENERATION THEORY:' FROM 'ETHICAL' TO 'POLITICAL' BUDDHISM

Discussions of Buddhism and violence are to large extent shaped by the notion that Buddhism (as a whole) is *essentially* based on non-violence. I suggest that the construction of Buddhism as 'non-violent' is partly the result of particular re-orientations brought about by Buddhist actors during the colonial encounters in nineteenth-century Ceylon. Elements in the Pāli canon were brought to the fore in European constructions of Buddhism as rational and ethical.[51] However, these constructions were later adopted by Buddhist revivalists as a tool in the struggle against the colonial power. For example, in the writings of Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933), the great champion of Buddhist revivalism in the early twentieth century, we see a clear polarization between 'barbaric Christianity' and the 'Human Religion' (i.e., Buddhism). In his characteristic polemical style, Dharmapala proclaimed that "The sweet, tender, gentle, Aryan children of an ancient,

historic race are sacrificed at the altar of the whiskey-drinking, beef-eating belly-god of heathenism."[52] In Dharmapala we see a particular ambiguity concerning violence, in that non-violence becomes a strategic tool vis-à-vis other religions (in particular Christianity), while at the same time the Buddhist revivalism associated with Dharmapala was militant and intolerant. This ambivalence, I suggest, is continued within the monastic order in Sri Lanka, as well as in lay movements.

If we turn to contemporary academic voices from Sri Lanka, we will see that violence is generally regarded as un-Buddhist. According to the Pāli and Buddhist studies scholar P.D. Premasiri, non-violence is one of the core virtues in Buddhism, and the ultimate goal of Buddhism is to overcome conflict in the consciousness of the individual.[53] Moreover, in line with the psychologizing tendency in Buddhist philosophy and ethics, conflicts at the mental, as well as the social level, are traced to psychological causes.[54] Consequently, wars originate in the minds of people. Moreover, as conflict is regarded as the result of an unenlightened response to one's sensory environment, Premasiri holds that "there could not be a righteous war from the Buddhist point of view."[55] However, Premasiri also points out that within a Buddhist community there are different degrees of moral development, and that ordinary lay Buddhists are involved in the pursuit of sense pleasures (*kāma*). This pursuit of *kāma* is seen as the most proximate psychological cause of conflict. As most people would hang on to their possessions, Buddhism 'considers conflict as an unavoidable evil in society.'[56] Nonetheless, Premasiri concludes, the ultimate religious goal of *nibbāna* is antithetical to acts of violence.

A similar view is held by the Sri Lankan scholar-monk Ven. Mahinda Deegalle, who claims that "Buddhist teachings maintain that under any circumstance, whether it is political, religious, cultural or ethnic, violence cannot be accepted or advocated in solving disputes among nations."[57] Based on narratives that emphasize loving-kindness and compassion in a violent world, Deegalle refutes that Buddhism can be a source for just-war ideology. In this view, the true pacifism of Buddhism is unquestionable, and violence committed in Buddhist societies is due to violations of the norm. Moreover, he states that "Whatever violence found in the so-called Buddhist societies is merely a deviation from the doctrine of the Buddha and a misinterpretation of Buddha's valuable message."[58]

The Sri Lankan anthropologist Gananath Obeysekere also questions the Buddhist identity of those who advocate violence, and argues that it is a 'perversion of Buddhism' and a rejection of their 'Buddhist heritage.'[59] A distinction is made between 'the Buddhist doctrinal tradition' and Buddhist history, where violence committed in Buddhist Sri Lanka is explained as a result of the growth of ethno-nationalism (whether considered a precolonial or postcolonial phenomenon). These strong condemnations of militant Buddhism during the civil war must be understood as a particular *political* positioning during the war, where Sri Lankan intellectuals, like

Tambiah[60] and Obeyesekere, sought to challenge militant Sinhala nationalism. Obeyesekere has even called for a 'fundamentalist turn,' i.e., a return to the original scriptures, to find the perceived original truth of non-violence.[61] Moreover, Obeyesekere, Premasiri and Deegalle share the view that violence in Buddhist societies is caused by deviation of the norm not to kill, and in my view, they can be read as insider interpretations of the religious tradition. In the context of the Sri Lankan civil war, they draw upon the abundance of sources in the Pāli canon that call for non-violence.

However, while not ignoring the fact that the direct encouragement of the use of violence for a just cause seems to be absent in the Pāli canon,[62] I find the distinction between Buddhist soteriology/doctrinal Buddhism and Buddhist history problematic simply because texts considered part of doctrinal Buddhism are not self-contained with meaning; their interpretations are always a product of history. What I see as philosophical reductionism (i.e., Buddhism as a non-violent philosophy) is profoundly essentialist; it ascribes a certain meaning in texts in the Pāli canon and leaves little room for different textual interpretations. Radical readings of Buddhist doctrines, like that presented by Rathana, cannot be explained away as 'un-Buddhist.' However, even if we were to accept separation between doctrine and history, would a 'return to the canon' really give unequivocal answers?

## CANONICAL AMBIGUITY

As discussed, there is a strong normative discourse regarding non-violence within Buddhist Sri Lanka. However, an outsider perspective would emphasize that Buddhism—like any other religious tradition—contains multiple (and often contradictory) ideas and practices. For example, as pointed out by Schmithausen, it could be argued that early Buddhism "somehow took for granted the unrelated co-existence of private non-injury and warfare as the duty of kings and warriors."[63] While radical pacifism evidently is found in the canon, so also the assumption that violence belongs to a separate sphere of activity, that of the warrior caste (kings). In fact, the Buddha appears to be reserved in advocating absolute pacifism vis-à-vis kings. We can only speculate about the reasons for the Buddha's reservation in this matter, albeit Bareau's position that the Buddha may have considered political interference as detrimental to the future of the order, seems plausible.[64] Therefore, although for very different reasons, the pacifism of both the early Christians and the early Buddhists is questionable. Moreover, although discussions of the nature of Buddhist ethics is far from exhausted, there seems to be an increasing awareness that Buddhist ethics has no single underlying moral theory beneath it: that Buddhists at all times have argued about several moral theories, and finally that Buddhist ethics is contextual.[65] I would like to conclude with a quote from the Pāli scholar Oliver Freiberger, who in a general discussion of the Pāli canon states that

> A canon's general feature of being authoritative and normative does not presuppose homogeneity of its contents. On the contrary, it seems oftentimes, heterogeneity of the canon contributes much to the success of a religion; the more views and practices can be legitimized by passages from the canon, the more worldviews are represented, and the more people can feel at home in that religious tradition.[66]

The canonical ambiguity concerning war, I believe, has made the co-existence of the Sangha and state power possible for more than two millennia. In my view, much of the writings on Buddhism and nationalism/violence in Sri Lanka rests upon a prototypic definition of religion, i.e., a constructed original which is compared to later 'deviations' from that original. In this case—and in accordance with the textual emphasis of Buddhist studies—the original is supposedly found in the doctrines of the Pāli canon. Moreover, the Pāli canon is often associated with soteriology and individual ethics, whereas other aspects of religion are regarded as later deviations. Politics, then, are often not viewed as part of doctrine, or early, 'pristine' Buddhism.[67] In my view, what I call 'degeneration explanations' are no more than normative evaluations of change that do not give an explanation as to why and how Buddhists themselves base their thoughts and actions within the Buddhist tradition.[68] The crucial point in this chapter has been to show that canonical ambiguity on violence leaves open to the contemporary monk in Sri Lanka a range of political positions, as well as practices, in relation to war. Moreover, there is a need to deconstruct the concept of 'Buddhism and non-violence.' To reduce monastic identity to a militant—non-militant dichotomy is to loose sight of the complex social realities in which these identities are shaped. As my field material suggests, monks are involved in a wide range of activities that connects them to military institutions. Moreover, monks in a war zone, like ordinary civilians, face violence, and they, like any others, live in a highly militarised social world of army camps, army check points, soldiers, fighting, traumas and fear.

It has not been my intention to explain the high levels of violence in Sri Lanka, but it has been my concern to suggest ways in which religious actors, in this case Buddhist monks, relate to violent contexts. The growth of ethno-nationalism in colonial Sri Lanka can certainly explain the radicalization of sections of the Sangha. Nonetheless, in my view, the general absence of pacifism among monks, as well as their many points of interaction with the military, is best explained in terms of canonical ambiguity and flexibility.

## NOTES

1. Ananda Abeysekara, *Colors of the robe: religion, identity, and difference* (Columbia, S.C.: The University of South Carolina Press, 2002).

2. Pannasiha belonged to one of the subgroups of the Amarapura Nikāya and resided in Vajirarama, an important center for Buddhist modernism. He later became the leader of the entire Amarapura Nikāya, until his death in 2003. The quote is from Madhie Pannasiha, *Peace Through Tolerance and Co-existence*, ed. Siri Vajiraññna Dharmayatana (Maharagama, Sri Lanka: Sasana Sevaka Society, 1985), 6. This booklet was distributed in Buddhist bookshops in Sri Lanka.
3. The text reads 'greed, envy and anger,' although the usual list of the three most basic afflictions (*kilesa*) includes greed, hatred, and delusion.
4. This 'terrorist discourse,' like in many other places of militant resistance to states around the world, strengthened its position with the global discourse on the 'war on terror' after 9/11. However, the 'terrorist explanatory model' goes back to the 1980s in Sri Lanka, when the LTTE 'refined' its military tactics to include terrorist attacks amidst Sinhala-dominated areas.
5. He was one of the members of Committee of Inquiry on Buddhist Affairs, which published the report *The Betrayal of Buddhism* in 1956. This report came to have great influence on the Buddhist revival and on state-Sangha relations.
6. This move to pressurize Prime Minister Senanayake to leave the pact is mentioned in a biography written by K.D.G Wimalaratne (the Director of Department of Archives, Sri Lanka) at Vihara, accessed April 26, 2010, http://www.vihara.org/au.
7. Quoted in Tessa J. Bartholomeusz, *In defense of Dharma: just-war ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002),124.
8. Interview with high-ranking monk in the Colombo area, May 2004.
9. Interview with high-ranking monk in Colombo, July 2004.
10. *Nikāya* is a monastic division, or lineage in Theravāda Buddhism.
11. See 'The Ceasefire Agreement Rejected,' April 18, 2002, accessed August 12, 2010, http://www.sinhaya.com/mou-rejected.htm.
12. See *Lankaweb*, accessed December 16, 2004, http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items02/210702–3.html .
13. Later, in 2004, the JHU established a Supreme Sangha Council, thus bypassing the traditional Sangha structure.
14. *Daily Mirror*, October 5, 2004.
15. See also Sunil Bastian, "Politics of Social Exclusion, State Reform and Security in Sri Lanka," *Ids Bulletin-Institute of Development Studies* 40, No. 2 (2009): 7.
16. *SinhalaNet*, October 31, 2008, accessed April 24, 2010, http://www.sinhalanet.com.
17. *Colombo Page*, April 29, 2009, accessed February 14, 2010, http://www.colombopage.com/archive_09/April29135431RA.html .
18. In 2008 and 2009, a population of more than 250,000 people was trapped within a 250-square-kilometer area. They faced intense fighting and lacked food, water, sanitation, and health care.
19. In fact, all military activities of the LTTE were deemed 'terrorist' and thus illegitimate, while state violence was regarded as a necessary evil.
20. Interview with JHU monk in Colombo, July 2004.
21. The main difference between these two categories is that while the former entails questions concerning just cause, right authority, right intention and proportionality (that the war not do more harm than good), the second has to do with restraining war once it has begun and with reducing harm. See "Introduction" in James Turner Johnson, *Just war tradition and the restraint of war: a moral and historical inquiry* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981) for further details.

22. In particular, the pacifism of the early Church has been questioned by James Turner Johnson, *The quest for peace: three moral traditions in western cultural history* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).
23. Comparative studies about 'Just war' show that the term can also meaningfully be applied to Islamic ethics and jurisprudence concerning war. See, for example, the writings of John Kelsay, *Islam and war: a study in comparative ethics* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993); John Kelsay, *Arguing the just war in Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).
24. See, for example, Damien Keown's entry "War and Peace," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Damien Keown and Charles S. Prebish (London: Routledge, 2010).
25. Tessa Bartholomesuz, *In defense of Dharma: just-war ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), 66.
26. Interviews with high-ranking monks in Colombo, May and August 2004.
27. Athurliye Rathana, "A Buddhist Analysis of the Ethnic Conflict" (paper presented at the conference *Buddhism and Conflict in Sri Lanka*, June 2002, Bath Spa University, UK).
28. Gananath Obeyesekere, "Social Change and Deities—Rise of Kataragama cult in modern Sri Lanka," *Man* 12 (1977): 3–4. I also discuss the issue of military appropriation of Kataragama in my unpublished master's thesis "Kataragama in a time of national crisis: diversity and and exclusion in a sacred place in Sri Lanka" (University of Oslo, 2003).
29. On the role of gods in the Sinhala Buddhist pantheon, see, for example, Richard Gombrich, *Precept and practice: traditional Buddhism in the rural highlands of Ceylon* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991 [1971]) and Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism transformed: religious change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).
30. This term is of recent usage and went along with the creation of an exclusivist Buddhist identity in the eighteenth century; see Steven Kemper, *The presence of the past: chronicles, politics, and culture in Sinhala life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 3.
31. It should be noted that 'spirit religion' is an *etic* term, and that this religious tradition does not have an *emic* term, although the distinction between *buddhāgama* and the 'spirit religion' is clear within Buddhist Sri Lanka.
32. Gananath Obeyesekere, "Buddhism, Nationhood, and Cultural Identity: A Question of Fundamentals," in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, ed. Martin E. Marty and Scott R. Appleby (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 231–256.
33. Field notes, northern Sri Lanka, February 2006.
34. Field notes, Trincomalee and Ampara, 2006.
35. Interviews with monks in Trincomalee, March 2006.
36. In Sri Lanka 'Muslim' is regarded as a distinctive ethnic identity. The majority of Muslims are Tamil-speaking, while a small minority speak Sinhala.
37. For further details on monastic involvement in the JVP insurrection, see Ananda Abeysekara, *Colors of the robe: religion, identity, and difference* (Columbia, S.C.: The University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 201–239.
38. This is underlined by the fact that the Sangha is not self-recruiting; it is dependent upon the laity donating their sons and daughters to it. Moreover, recent scholarship draws our attention to passages in the Pāli canon were the organizational as well as the soteriological distinctions between the Sangha and the laity are blurred, Oliver Freiberger, "The Buddhist Canon and the Canon of Buddhist Studies," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 27: 2 (2004).

39. Michael Carrithers, "They Will Be Lords Upon the Island: Buddhism in Sri Lanka," in *The World of Buddhism: Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture*, ed. Heinz Bechert and Richard Gombrich (New York: Facts on File, 1984), 134.
40. Protective verses from the Pāli canon.
41. Originally it meant 'giving' or 'generosity;' see Richard Gombrich, *Precept and practice: traditional Buddhism in the rural highlands of Ceylon*, 88.
42. Interview with monk in Vavuniya, February 2006.
43. In a recent article Daniel Kent shows how Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka balance between serving the needs of the soldiers (with their suffering and ethical dilemmas in the battlefield) and serving the government's need for committed soldiers, Daniel Kent, "'Onward Buddhist Soldiers'," in *Buddhist Warfare*, ed. Michael K. Jerryson and Mark Juergensmeyer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
44. See http://www.dharmayathanaya.org.lk.
45. *Dāyaka* refers to lay donors of the monastic community. For example, each village organize a *dāyaka* committee to provide for the local temple.
46. Field notes, 2005–2006, interviews March 2010.
47. Lambert Schmithausen, "Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude Towards War," in *Violence Denied: Violence, Non-Violence and the Rationalization of Violence in South Asian Cultural History*, ed. Jan E.M. Houben and K.R. Van Kooij (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 53.
48. Michael Jerryson, "Appropriating a Space for Violence: State Buddhism in Southern Thailand," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies,* 40/1, (February 2009): 33–57.
49. See, for example, the exception made to the rule (Pācittiya XLVIII) made by the Buddha so that a monk could go and look after a sick uncle in the army.
50. I thank Prof. Ute Hüsken for pointing out this to me.
51. On the early days of Buddhist studies and constructions of Buddhism, see in particular Philip C. Almond, *The British discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Charles Hallisey, "Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravāda Buddhism," in *Curators of the Buddha: the study of Buddhism under colonialism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Richard King, *Orientalism and religion: post-colonial theory, India and 'the mystic East'* (London: Routledge, 1999).
52. Anagarika Dharmapala, *Return to righteousness: a collection of speeches, essays and letters of the Anagarika Dharmapala*, ed. A. Guruge. ([Colombo?]: Anagarika Dharmapala Birth Centenary Committee, Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, Ceylon, 1965), 484.
53. P.D. Premasiri, "A 'Righteous War' in Buddhism?," in *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka*, ed. Mahinda Degalle (New York: Routledge, 2006), 78–85.
54. These are *āsava* (influxes), *anusaya* (latent evil) and *kilesa* (psychological defilements).
55. Premasiri, "A 'Righteous War'," 81.
56. Premasiri, "A 'Righteous War'," 82.
57. Mahinda Deegalle, "Is Violence Justified in Theravãda Buddhism?," *Current Dialogue,* 39 (June 2001), 2.
58. Deegalle, "Is Violence Justified," 2. See also Deegalle's contribution to the present volume (Chapter 1).
59. Gananath Obeyesekere, "Dutthagamani and the Buddhist Conscience," in *Religion and Political Conflict in South Asia: India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka*, ed. Douglas Allen (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1992), 158.

60. Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed?: Religion, Politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
61. Gananath Obeyesekere, "Buddhism, Nationhood, and Cultural Identity: A Question of Fundamentals," in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, ed. Martin E. Marty and Scott R. Appleby (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 254.
62. Premasiri, "A 'Righteous War';" Schmithausen, "Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude."
63. Schmithausen, "Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude," 48.
64. André Bareau, "Le Bouddha Et Les Rois," *Bulletin de l'Ecole fransaise d'Extrême-Orient* 80:1 (1993): 38. For more on early Buddhist attitudes on politics and the state, see Balkrishna G. Gokhale, "Early Buddhist Kingship," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 26/1 (1966): 15–22; Balkrishna G. Gokhale, "The Early Buddhist View of the State," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 89:4 (1969): 731–738.
65. Charles Hallisey, "Ethical Particularism in Theravāda Buddhism," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 3 (1996): 32–43; Tessa J. Bartholomeusz, *In Defense of Dharma: Just-War Ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002).
66. Oliver Freiberger, "The Buddhist Canon and the Canon of Buddhist Studies," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies,* 27:2 (2004): 261–283.
67. This is not to argue, however, that the Buddha was clear on political issues.
68. Interestingly, this idea of decay or pollution of 'pure Buddhism' resembles Buddhist ideas about the continual decline of the teaching of the Buddha in its historical context (*buddha-sāsana*). Various predictions are made about the duration of the teachings. It is believed that in due course a new Buddha will appear and teach the eternal teaching (*dhamma*) anew.

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# 6 The Monks and the Hmong

## The Special Relationship between the Chao Fa and the Tham Krabok Buddhist Temple in Saraburi Province, Thailand

*Ian G. Baird*

### INTRODUCTION

The Tham Krabok Theravāda Buddhist temple in Phraphuttabat District, Saraburi Province, central Thailand, is far from typical. The Buddhist practices and teachings at Wat Tham Krabok (WTK)[1] are unlike those of any other Buddhist institution in Thailand. Indicative of its uniqueness—or at least its inability to gain mainstream acceptance amongst the Buddhist Sangha in Thailand—WTK is not officially a temple compound, or *wat* in Thai, according to the Thai governing body for Buddhism in the country, the Sangha National Council (*Thera Samakhom* in Thai). Instead, it is designated at a lower level, as a "Sangha residence" or *samnak song* in Thai.[2] The sign on the impressive cement archway entering WTK states that it is a *wat*, even if the present abbot,[3] Achan Boonsong Tanajaro, the fourth in the line of this particular tradition (see Illustration 6.1), acknowledges that the sign does not actually reflect its official status.[4] This is despite WTK covering over 300 *rai* (48 hectares), being presently home to about 120 monks and many white-clothed *mae chee* ('nuns'), containing numerous massive Buddhist images, and being occupied by monks for over half a century, since its founding in 1957.[5] The temple is best known for facilitating—according to WTK's own records—the treatment of over 105,000 Thai and foreigner drug and alcohol "addicts" since 1959. Some foreigners, mainly former addicts, have been ordained there as monks.

One of the various aspects of WTK that distinguishes it from other Buddhist institutions is its special relationship with ethnic Hmong people, both from Thailand and Laos. According to the present abbot, Luang Por Yai (*Luang Mae* in Hmong), the female founder of WTK (Illustrations 6.2 and 6.3), claimed to remember a promise she made with the Hmong in a previous life, a pledge that both the Hmong and Luang Por Yai would assist each other as much as possible, a vow that she evidently took very seriously, and one that she strongly bestowed on her nephew, Luang Por Chamroon Parnchand (Solakassapa), the first abbot of WTK (see Illustration 6.4). Luang Por Chamroon was a strong supporter of the Hmong. Apparently there was no need to speak of the pledge when the Hmong met Luang Por Yai and Luang Por Chamroon for the first time. "Both sides

already understood each other," claimed Achan Boonsong in July 2011. "If it was spoken, it would have been like lying, as nobody would have believed," he said. Luang Por Chamroon apparently did not desire anything from the Hmong; he just wanted to help them, according to Achan Boonsong. "We have to help everyone, not just the Hmong. The sun has now set, so we do not have to understand what has passed. We should not think too much about the past, or be too connected with it, so that we can escape from suffering," he commented. Yet it seems important to understand what happened at WTK.

This chapter explores the relationship between Tham Krabok Buddhist temple and the Hmong, including the links to the violent anti-Communist insurrection that was an important part of what brought the two together. How did this relationship develop, and what transpired that resulted in the Theravāda Buddhist temple supporting militant insurgent activities? How did the temple negotiate its involvement, considering Buddhist *vinaya* rules that prevent the perpetration of violent acts by monks, or their involvement in the arms trade? How did the Buddhist practices and anti-Communist convictions interplay with each other? This chapter is not about direct violence by Buddhist monks, but rather the indirect involvement of monks and a Buddhist institution in supporting armed anti-Communist insurgency. I focus on the circumstances that resulted in WTK providing considerable 'humanitarian' and other assistance to the Hmong; particularly those involved in anti-Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) political and military operations. I begin by outlining the unusual history of WTK and its three original founders, Luang Por Yai, Luang Por Chamroon, and Luang Por Charoen (all with the last name Parnchand). I then briefly discuss the special relationship between WTK and the Hmong, and how it developed and transformed, to the point where the temple provided significant support to anti-Lao PDR government insurgents, and refugees from the same conflict. I explain the nature of WTK's involvement in facilitating 15,658 Hmong (mainly) from Laos living on land owned by the temple to officially immigrate to the US and elsewhere in 2004–2005.[6]

I want to demonstrate the ways the Tham Krabok Buddhist temple, and particularly its late abbot, Luang Por Chamroon Parnchand, linked his extreme right-wing political views with particular Buddhist practice, and finally the provision of strong support to anti-Communist movements. This chapter constitutes another example of how Buddhist institutions, such as WTK, have been intricately involved with indirectly perpetrating violence by others, while at the same time advocating particular Buddhist practices, including following the typical *vinaya* rules adhered to by Theravāda Buddhist monks plus an additional ten clauses, as tools for moving closer to the ultimate goal of nirvana or enlightenment (see below for details). I also build on previous scholarship in Thailand and other parts of the Theravāda Buddhist world, particularly Sri Lanka,[7] Burma,[8] Laos,[9] and Thailand[10], that is intent on dispelling the notion that Buddhists always support non-violent conflict resolution.[11]



*Figure 6.1* Achan Boonsong Tanajaro, 'abbot' in 2011 of Tham Krabok temple, Phraphutthabat District, Saraburi Province, Thailand [photo by Ian Baird].



*Figure 6.2* Mian Parnchand, later known as 'Luang Por Yai' in Thai, a self-declared *bhikkhuni* (female Buddhist monk) and co-founder of Tham Krabok temple, Thailand [complements of Tham Krabok temple].



*Figure 6.3* Luang Por Yai, the co-founder of Tham Krabok temple, Thailand.

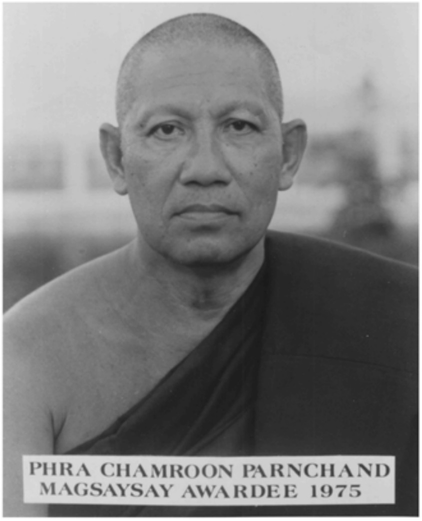



*Figure 6.4* Chamroon Parnchand or Luang Por Chamroon, the first abbot of Tham Krabok temple, Thailand, and the 1975 recipient of the Magsaysay Award [complements of Tham Krabok temple].

## LUANG POR YAI: THE FOUNDER OF THAM KRABOK BUDDHIST TEMPLE

The key to understanding the special relationship between the Hmong and WTK is the association between Luang Por Yai and the Hmong. According to the Thai monks, this led WTK, and the temple's abbot, Luang Por Chamroon, to provide the Hmong with special treatment and support.

The title "Luang Por Yai" is unusual in Thai language, and requires some explanation. "Luang Por" is a respectful title in front of names of senior male monks. "Yai" mean large in Thai. Thus, "Luang Por Yai" means something like "Respected Founder Father," an extremely odd title for a woman.

The monks at WTK were not particularly keen to provide details about Mian Parnchand or Luang Por Yai's life. Still, they do profess that she was already a very special person at birth. Some thought she was crazy as a very young girl, as she was said to have been able to deliver high-level Buddhist sermons at the age of two. As a child she claimed to remember her past lives, be able to communicate with various spirits, and predict the future. Chamroon believed that she had reached a certain level of enlightenment in a past life. For reasons not understood by her or others, however, she apparently became a normal person at the age of twelve, losing all her special abilities.

Later she experienced extreme poverty, married, and had two children, both boys, before splitting up with her husband after she became an out-of-control alcoholic while living in the Khlong Toey slum in Bangkok. She eventually ended up on the streets, where apparently nobody respected her. Then one day when she was lying at the side of the road, she allegedly miraculously started remembering her past lives again. She immediately stopped drinking and was very ashamed of her past bad acts. She apologized to her grown children; they supported her to ordain[12] in 1949–1950 as a *mae chee*, a white-robed Buddhist 'nun,' at the Buddhist temple of Wat Khong Mao, which was located in her home village in Lopburi Province.

I asked Achan Boonsong if Luang Por Yai was considered to be a monk or a *mae chee*. He hesitated in answering, probably due to legal concerns, since *bhikkhuni*, or female monks, are not legally permitted in Thailand, even if some have emerged in recent years.[13] Only *mae chee*, who are not considered the female equivalents of monks, have legal status in Thailand. Achan Boonsong said that Luang Por Yai was officially ordained as a *mae chee* but was later considered to be a "*phra*" (monk). When I asked who ordained her as a monk, however, Achan Boonsong said he did not know, and after some discussion it seemed evident that she was never actually ordained as a *bhikkhuni*. It appears that people just started treating her as a monk, and she started wearing brown robes like monks, and doing long walks (*thu dong*) like male monks (this is apparently not known for female *mae chee* elsewhere, Achan Boonsong acknowledged). Achan Boonsong said that it is not important if she is known as a *phra* or a *mae chee*. It

depends how people think of her. But to them she was equivalent to a male monk, and they take all their special *satcha* (truth) teachings from her, so she is their teacher. They still frequently play her sermons (taped) to teach monks. However, no other women have followed in her footsteps, although the abbot believes that women potentially have the same abilities as men to attain enlightenment. Achan Boonsong said, however, that the temple has not considered ordaining other woman at this time.

Some years earlier Luang Por Chamroon, in an interview with Thanakorn Suriyon, claimed that Luang Por Yai was "like a monk" and later lived as a monk. According to him, "she didn't feel like she was a woman." Eventually, she announced that she was a female monk named "Luang Por Yai Khetmarajja," although she was not accepted in the Thai Buddhist hierarchy. Luang Por Chamroon was quoted saying that being a monk depended on one's mind (*jai* in Thai), not on one's body or outfit. Luang Por Yai herself apparently once said that if people were still attached to the idea that a monk had to be a man, it would be hard for such a person to attain enlightenment. Her followers understand that she achieved enlightenment.[14]

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THAM KRABOK BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Luang Por Yai's nephew, Chamroon Parnchand, was born in Bangli Village, Bangli Sub-District, Thawoong District, Lopburi Province on April 1, 1926. His parents were named Chamlong and Lieng Parnchand, and he was the second of seven children. His father was in the Royal Thai Air Force, and his mother was a farmer. However, around the time Chamroon began his education, his family moved to Bangkok (Khlong San, Thonburi) after his father was blinded in both eyes due to an explosion that occurred when he was repairing an aircraft. Therefore, he left the military and moved to Bangkok to receive medical treatment. Once there, Chamroon began his primary education at Wat Thong Thammachat. He then studied at various schools until finally graduating at Wat Saraburi Province high school. Initially he studied to be a mechanic in the Royal Thai Air Force, hoping to follow his father's example, but soon a friend convinced him to become a police officer. He graduated from the police academy and entered the Thai secret police force, *santiban* in Thai, in 1945. Chamroon worked in the political unit, where he gained considerable influence, developing many important contacts in Bangkok, especially in the police and armed forces, since he frequently coordinated discussions between these sometimes feuding institutions. When Chamroon's father was dying, he told his wife, Chamroon and Charoen's mother, to rely on his younger sister, their aunt, Luang Por Yai, to help look after the family, which she did.[15]

Chamroon eventually became known as the 'right-hand man' of Phao Sriyanond, the director of the police department between 1951–1957, and Chamroon also sometimes served as a body guard to Prime Minister

(formerly Field Marshall) Plaek Phibulsongkhram and members of the Thai royal family. Phao Sriyanond had strong connections with the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and was also close to Plaek Phibulsongkhram. The details of Chamroon's work as a police officer, including his rank, were secret, but he was apparently assigned to special operations ordered by Phao, including suppressing the opium trade, and pursuing Vietnamese and Chinese Communists. He had considerable power and probably worked closely with the CIA, if not for them. In 1952–1953 he was put in charge of looking after the camp of Supply Unit #4 at Erawan Air force base in Lopburi,[16] where he apparently "worked in places where nobody could help him [if he was to make even a small mistake]."[17] He never publicly acknowledged participating in missions inside Laos, although he claimed that he thrived on complicated and dangerous operations. He married and had two children.[18]

One anonymous source in Thailand told me that Chamroon worked in Laos as a "kicker" for Air America in early 1957, even before the first American soldiers went to Laos as part of the 'hotfoot' White Star operation in July 1959.[19] Air America did not, however, exist at the time. It is possible, however, that he worked with Air America's predecessor, Civil Air Transport (CAT), which was acquired by the CIA in August 1950.[20] After the 1954 Geneva Accords, CAT sent three planes to Udorn Thani to operate in Laos, and by July 1, 1957, CAT had a base in Laos linked to a contract with the US Embassy in Vientiane to fly to various parts of the country on missions (probably mainly for the CIA). Over the next two years the US presence in Laos increased, with CAT changing its name to Air America in March 1959.[21] Since Thai special operations were based at Erawan, and the Thais were working closely with the Americans, it seems plausible that Chamroon did indeed help "kick" or push supplies out of airplanes on secret missions in Laos before he entered the monkhood. This probably occurred before CAT was based in Laos in 1957. Luang Por Chamroon spoke some English (apparently less than what he wanted some to believe), and it is rumored that he went to Vientiane once before 1975 in order to meet the Prime Minister, Souvanna Phouma.

Although Luang Por Chamroon did not mention the role that the military coup d'état of 1957 had on him entering the monkhood in his interview with Thanakorn Suriyon,[22] his nephew Phra Joe Parnchand told me that Chamroon's fortunes took a dramatic turn for the worse in September 1957 when Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat successfully overthrew the Plaek Phibulsongkhram government. Despite being a career soldier, Sarit installed himself as Prime Minister, a position he held until his death, due to illness, on December 8, 1963. Phao Sriyanond, being aligned with Plaek Phibulsongkhram and with the police being particularly hated by Sarit, fled the country.[23] Because Chamroon was close to Phao his life was believed to be in danger.[24] This apparently led him into the monkhood, although he had been ordained years earlier for a shorter period. It is possible that Chamroon learned a valuable

lesson from the coup, one that convinced him that his calling was as a member of the Buddhist clergy rather than as a plain-clothed secret police officer. Achan Boonsong told me that Luang Por Chamroon wanted to become a monk for a long time before then, ever since his father passed away (see Figure 6.5), which is what Chamroon claimed.[25]

Some, including his political opponents, were initially sceptical of the sincerity of Chamroon's turn to the monkhood, since he had been involved in undercover operations before. They assumed he was doing what many other Thais had long done when in trouble, become a monk as a way of avoiding serious problems as a lay person. In fact, that may have been his original intent; it is unclear, as recorded interviews with him make no mention of this;[26] but he certainly became devoted to the life of a monk, and he remained ordained right up to his death in May 1999. As Achan Boonsong

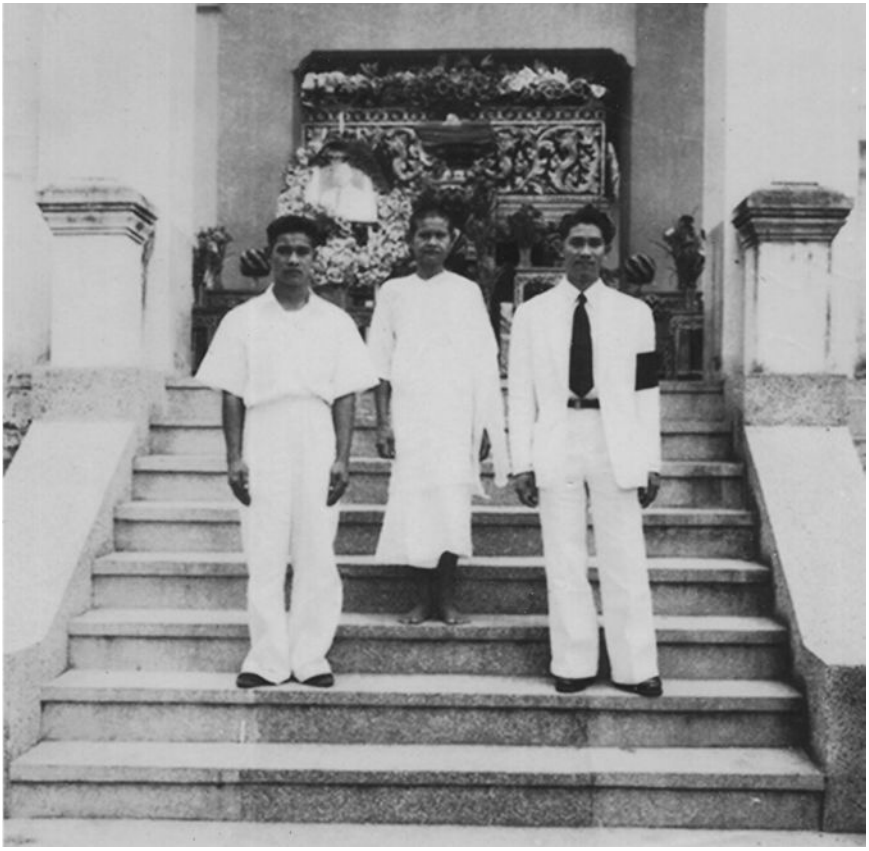


*Figure 6.5* Charoen Parnchand (later Luang Por Charoen), Mian Parnchand (later Luang Por Yai), and Chamroon Parnchand (later Luang Por Chamroon) at the funeral of Chamroon and Chareon's father, early 1950s [complements of Joe Parnchand].

put it, "The coup d'état caused Luang Por Chamroon to understand about *satcha* (truth)."

Joe Westermeyer, who was very impressed with Luang Por Chamroon, provided the following description of him,

> "He has that undefinable charisma that one occasionally sees particularly in the Orient that attracts, leads, controls and inspires devotion and dedication. He is highly intelligent, poorly educated, emphatic and a master of applied psychology. He is humble, unassuming but has complete confidence in his power for good. By his own statement this power has come to him by rigid self-discipline and adherence to the middle way."[27]

The next part of the story remains unclear, as not all the accounts of this period are consistent. It does appear, however, that Luang Por Chamroon started looking for a temple in which to stay. He considered Wat Yairom in Thonburi, on the outskirts of Bangkok, but eventually Luang Por Yai, Chamroon and Charoen walked to WTK, arriving in 1957. They settled down and never left.

Early on, the Hmong held little significance for the monks at WTK, as there were no Hmong living in the general area. In 1959, however, the Thai government announced that opium cultivation, trade or consumption was illegal, and soon after WTK started treating drug addicts, although there was initially no actual plan to do so.[28] Air Force Chief Marshal Thawee Chunlasap, with the full support of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat,[29] began supporting the treatment work through buying land for the temple and helping to construct a hospital and other buildings on site. The first addicts were treated in 1959, although there were initially few. By 1961, the year that Luang Por Yai identified the seven natural ingredients to the detoxifying concoction given to all patients, larger numbers of addicts were accepted for treatment, and by 1963 WTK was fully set up to admit addicts for treatment.[30]

Luang Por Yai passed away in 1970 at the age of 60. The new Buddhist order founded on Luang Por Yai's teachings advocated the adoption of ten additional precepts referred to as *satcha*, or truth (also referred to as *lokkutarat*), apart from the 227 all Theravāda monks must abide by. It is required that all ranking WTK monks follow the additional rules on top of the regular vinaya, as follows:

(1) Those who ordain must determine in advance how long they will remain in the monkhood (how many days, months, and years).
(2) Those who ordain are only permitted to eat one meal per day (in the morning).
(3) Those who ordain cannot use any form of transportation (vehicle, boat, or airplane).[31]

(4) Those who ordain cannot cause division amongst group members, or promote dividing up into groups or factions.
(5) Those who ordain cannot accept any gifts for personal accumulation, but will give them all to the community.
(6) Those who ordain cannot accumulate money.
(7) Those who ordain cannot create division and conflict.
(8 Those who ordain cannot believe that the community will lead them in the wrong direction.
(9) Those who ordain must meditate and/or chant during the time they are ordained for the time it takes for a predetermined number of incense sticks to burn down, over a particular period. They cannot leave their meditation or chanting until the incense sticks have burnt down completely according to what they have committed to.
(10) Those who ordain must go on spiritual walking journeys (*thu dong* in Thai) each year, determining how many incense sticks will be burned during the trip.[32]

## HMONG PERSPECTIVES

Many Hmong have different ideas about the origins of Luang Por Yai. Some claim that she was initially not a human but a deer or another wild animal that stayed in a cave near WTK, and that she later emerged from the cave



*Figure 6.6* Luang Por Yai and four Hmong women from Thailand, the first time Luang Por Yai apparently met with "her people," the Hmong, near Tham Krabok temple, Thailand, early 1960s [photo of photo by Ian Baird].

as a human. Some Hmong also believe that because she was transformed from being a wild animal, she was not actually related to Luang Por Chamroon and Luang Por Charoen. A Hmong man told me that the monks at WTK invited Luang Por Yai from the cave. The claim is that a vehicle was able to drive near the cave and that Luang Por Yai entered the vehicle, but that it could not move as long as she was in it, so she exited. She asked that "her people be summoned," and that she could only continue from the cave together with "her people:" the Hmong. She did not, however, initially refer to them as the Hmong but as people described in Thai as having "*kang keng leua, seua mai pho*" (extra big pants, and not long enough shirts), a description linked to the dress of some Hmong males in Thailand. Initially, the Thai brought some ethnic Ieu Mien Yao people to her, but she said that they were not the right people. Finally, Hmong were brought to her. Some Hmong claim that Luang Por Yai was able to speak Hmong with them the first time they met. To this day there is still a photo at WTK that shows Luang Por Yai together with four Hmong from Thailand. According to the Hmong, it was those Hmong who convinced her to come down (see Figure 6.6).

Another Hmong version of this story does not involve Luang Por Yai having been a deer. However, she was located in a cave near Tham Krabok. The Thai locals realized that she was a holy person and went to ask that she come down. To entice her, they supposedly built WTK and then asked her to come live at the temple, but she refused. She told them that she would only come down if they called "her people" from the mountains in Thailand to ask her to come down. They asked her who "her people" were and she allegedly said that they were simple people who were clad in black and red and green sashes. They surmised that she meant the Hmong so they asked some Hmong women to come to Tham Krabok. When the women came, Luang Por Yai finally descended from the cave. Because Luang Por Yai was believed to be a holy person, the Thai authorities tried to take her to a prestigious temple, but every time they put her in a car, it would not start. When they tried to airlift her out by helicopter, it also would not start. These were signs that she should be left at Tham Krabok, and presumably that she should not travel by vehicles or aircraft.

The monks at WTK, including the abbot, tell a different story, however. They deny that a vehicle tried to pick her up from near the cave, as there was no nearby road where the vehicle could go. They also claim that she was not able to stop vehicles from moving. Achan Boonsong claims that Luang Por Yai was just meditating at Tham Phatoon cave near WTK with Achan Wichai, another WTK monk. They stayed there for many months. They met Hmong people along the road on their way down. It was the first time (in that life) that Luang Por Yai had met Hmong people. It was around the same time that Hmong opium addicts began being treated at WTK in 1961.[33] Achan Boonsong also claimed that other similar unbelievable stories had emerged. For example, he said that he sometimes walked long distances, but then people would claim that he was able to levitate and fly through the air. He said that he could definitely not fly.

Some Hmong believe that Luang Por Yai was actually Hmong, a claim that seems unlikely to be true (at least in her life as Mian Parnchand). She may have claimed, however, to have been a Hmong during a previous life. It may have been during that previous life that Luang Por Yai, as a Hmong, promised to help the Hmong.

However, other Hmong believe that Luang Por Yai or Luang Mae was a reincarnation of *Niam Nkauj Ntsuab* (or simply *Nkauj Ntsuab*) (Princess Joua in Hmong), the female of the cognate pair that created the world by separating land from sea and creating mountains and valleys. Her male counterpart was *Txiv Nraug Nab* (or simply, *Nraug Nab*) (Prince Dro Na in Hmong). In Hmong cosmological belief, *Nkuaj Ntsuab* and *Nraug Nab* created the world. They each had a son, since both male and female gods can have offspring. Luang Por Chamroon was a reincarnation of *Nkauj Ntsuab's* son. This fit with Chamroon being Mian's nephew, which is essentially equivalent to a son in the Hmong way of considering kinship relations.[34] No wonder they respect Luang Por Yai so much; she was considered to be one of the creators of the world, and Luang Por Chamroon was helping his mother, as would be expected.

## THE HMONG FROM LAOS BEGIN GOING TO WAT THAM KRABOK

According to Joseph Westermeyer,[35] who worked extensively with WTK on addiction issues in the 1970s, a woman of Thai-Lao descent who lived in Vientiane learned about the success of the temple in treating addicts in the late 1960s, and informed her Buddhist auxiliary in Vientiane. Eventually she presented a proposal to officials at the Ministry of Social Welfare in Laos, who agreed to help facilitate the treatment of addicts from Laos at the Thai temple. The first addicts were sent to WTK from Laos in 1970, funded by private donations. In 1971 and 1972 the Ministry, impressed with the results at WTK, provided further supplementary funds, and between 1972 and 1974 the United States' Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding for an additional 1,700 addicts. Other groups, such as the Asia Foundation, also contributed. About 3,000 opium addicts in Laos ended up being treated at WTK. Most were from "tribal groups," including the Hmong, Ieu Mien, and Akha.

In late 1971 Pa Kao Her's spiritual teacher and cousin—the originator of the 'Mother of Writing' Hmong script[36] and the spiritual leader of the 'Chao Fa'—Shong Lue Yang, was assassinated. Some claim that soon after Pa Kao Her was transferred to Vientiane and assigned the task of accompanying the Hmong from Laos who traveled from Laos to Thailand for treatment.[37] Others close to him deny this, however, stating that fighting was heavy in the Long Tieng area at the time and Pa Kao Her would not have had the chance to leave the area. In any case, Hmong addicts from Laos were transported to WTK by large truck in groups of about 50 per trip, with one to three groups traveling to the temple in mid-1971.[38]

In 1975 Luang Por Chamroon was given one of Asia's most prestigious honors, the Ramon Magsaysay award, for his work with drug and alcohol detoxification.[39] Phra Joe Parnchand, Luang Por Chamroon`s great nephew, told me that Luang Por Chamroon was also one of ten people considered as a possible nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize. This apparently occurred in the mid-1990s, not many years before Luang Por Chamroon died, although I have not been able to confirm the account. Phra Joe said, "He had already won the Asian award so he could not win both awards." Luang Por Chamroon apparently told Phra Joe about his nomination.

## THE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF THAM KRABOK TEMPLE

Although WTK is far from orthodox, over history it has received considerable support from far right-wing police and military, and the Thai monarchy.[40] Some claim that Luang Por Chamroon was a member of the notorious extreme right-wing political group, NAWAPOL, which was linked to the violent oppression of left-leaning students at Thammasat University in 1976.[41] Others, such as Achan Boonsong, deny that Luang Por Chamroon was a member. In any case, when the WTK Foundation was established in 1989, the head of the Thai boy scouts, also well-known for its involvement in the extreme right-wing violence in 1976,[42] Police Major General Somkhuan Halikul, was made the deputy President of the foundation, with Luang Por Chamroon as the foundation's President. Speaking about Somkhuan, Achan Vichit commented, "He had a lot of power."[43]

Luang Por Chamroon was apparently close to Achan Kittivuddho, a Thai Thonburi based-monk who became famous for saying that it would not cause demerit to kill a Communist.[44] According to WTK monks, Kittivuddho, an acknowledged member of NAWAPOL, visited Luang Por Chamroon frequently, because Luang Por Chamroon could not ride in vehicles to visit him, due to his special *satcha* rules.

Luang Por Chamroon once asked Luang Por Yai how to solve the "problem of Communism." Luang Por Yai provided a short response, one that influenced Luang Por Chamroon significantly. She said, "Religion can solve [the problem]." He came to believe that if people had a strong confidence in Buddhism they would be unlikely to turn to Communism. That was a key reason why he decided to remain as a monk.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF POLITICAL CHANGES AND ASSOCIATED CONFLICT IN LAOS

Between the late 1950s and the early 1970s Laos was embroiled in complex civil conflict with important international cold war dimensions, with the Communist Pathet Lao being supported by North Vietnam and the Soviet bloc, and the right-wing and neutralist forces receiving assistance from the

US and members of the anti-Communist Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), including Thailand and South Vietnam.

However, by the early 1970s the US government came under great pressure at home to withdraw from the Vietnam conflict, and after being pressured by the US, the RLG, in February 1973, signed a peace agreement with the Pathet Lao, which led to an on-and-off ceasefire and the establishment of a coalition government. In the beginning of 1975 the Pathet Lao began to gradually take over the government, and by mid-1975 many senior politicians and military officers had fled the country. Up to 40,000 others were sent to remote parts of Laos, especially in Vieng Xay District, Houaphanh Province, for political 're-education,' known in Lao as *seminar*. In fact, frequently little actual 're-education' was involved. Most resembled hard labor camps, where many prisoners remained in very poor conditions for over a decade without officially having been convicted, or even charged, with any crime.[45]

Many of those who escaped or were released crossed into Thailand and joined others who had fled from Laos to set up small militias, sometimes divided on ethnic grounds[46] along the border, or inside Laos, in order to militarily and politically oppose the Lao PDR government. The Thai government also organized these Lao groups to collect intelligence along the border. The two main Hmong dominated groups were the United Lao National Liberation Front (ULNLF) (*Neo Hom Pot Poi Xat* in Lao), with General Vang Pao as its de facto leader, and the Ethnic Liberation Organization of Laos (ELOL) (*Ong Kan Pot Poi Thouk Xon Xat Xon Phao You Nai Lao* in Lao), inspired by the Hmong military leader Zong Zoua Her and actually led by his deputy Pa Kao Her.[47] Vaj Tswv Cim [Vang Chu Chi] Vue was the spiritual leader of the group,[48] with Vaj Tswv Cim literally meaning "marked by god." Both groups were officially established in 1981–1982. Intelligence collection missions, and anti-Lao PDR government campaigns, variously continued from late 1975 until 1988 when the Chatchai Choonhaven government in Thailand introduced the new policy of turning battlefields into market places (*plian sanam lop pen sanam kan kha* in Thai), with the desire to improve relations with the Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Vietnam governments. At this time Lao insurgent groups along the border were no longer part of Thailand's strategy, and began to disintegrate. Some in the Thai military and intelligence services continued to secretly support, or at least tolerate, insurgents from Laos, into the early and mid-1990s. Most groups, however, could no longer easily operate along the Thailand-Laos border, although some, such as the ULNLF and ELOL, managed to continue operations inside Laos well into the 1990s, and the remnants of these groups continue to hide in the forests of Laos today.

## HMONG RESISTANCE TO LAO COMMUNISTS AND THE ROLE OF WTK

In 1975, as the RLG was gradually being overpowered by the Pathet Lao, some neutralist and right-wing politicians and members of the military

began fleeing the country, although others stayed and even willingly traveled to various re-education camps in remote parts of the country (see earlier discussion). A few thousand Hmong were hastily evacuated to Thailand with US support in May 1975, including the only Hmong general in the RLA, Vang Pao, but most Hmong were left to their own devices.[49] Many did not know that their leaders had fled.

In 1967, around three years before she passed away, Luang Por Yai is said to have predicted that a large number of Hmong from Laos would come to WTK after 1975.[50] Her prophesy fit well with reality, thus increasing her status with both the Hmong and non-Hmong.

In 1975, some Hmong panicked at the thought of their former bitter enemies, the Vietnamese, taking control of their territory through the Pathet Lao. Others tried to remain calm, hoping for a smooth transition, but within months much of the area surrounding Phou Bia—the tallest mountain in Laos—was in turmoil, and by early 1976 the Hmong, and some ethnic Khmu allies, using leftover small arms that they had hidden away in 1975, had taken control of large parts of Vientiane and Xieng Khouang Provinces, limiting the Pathet Lao forces mainly to their larger bases. The Hmong rebels were all known as "Chao Fa," or the "Lords of the Sky" by Lao PDR government officials, but in fact, only one of the two major alliances truly deserved such a title, the followers of Shong Lue Yang, Zong Zoua Her, and Pa Kao Her, who were based inside Laos near Phou Bia. Later they adopted the term initially applied to them by the Lao.

The second more loosely defined group was nominally led by Hmong people previously aligned with the American CIA and especially Vang Pao, and while there were no official positions, Sai Shoua Yang is largely recognized as a key leader of this group. At this point the main objective of the Hmong was simply to maintain control of the areas where they lived through denying access to the Lao PDR government and military.

During this period the Lao PDR government found themselves losing control over various parts of the country, including Vieng Phou Kha and Na Le Districts in south-western Luang Namtha Province, northern Laos, which fell to insurgents under the command of the neutralist Khmu leader, Chanhsouk, at the beginning of 1977, and large parts of southwestern Savannakhet Province, and Champasak and Salavan Provinces, became increasingly dominated by anti-government insurgent activities. On July 18, 1977, the Lao PDR government and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam entered into a formal 25-year broad-based and widely reported on cooperation agreement,[51] one that the two countries hoped would legitimate the arrival of 50,000 Vietnamese troops required to help crush the strongest pockets of resistance in various parts of the country.[52] By late 1977 large numbers of Vietnamese troops were zeroing in on the Hmong areas of control in the mountains to the north of Vientiane. After bombarding them with heavy artillery and air attacks for a number of days, the Vietnamese were easily able to move in and regain control of large swaths of territory. Tens of thousands of Hmong fled, some towards the Mekong River and

Thailand to the west, hoping to avoid being killed or captured. Many, however, could not escape and were rounded up by the advancing Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces. Others died trying to make the strenuous journey to Thailand, either from injuries endured during the attacks, or as a result of food shortages and illness. Still others drowned or were shot as they tried to cross the Mekong River to Thailand. The Hmong experienced great suffering and hardship during this time.[53]

Not all of the Hmong either fled to Thailand or came under the control of the Communists. Some, including the Chao Fa under Zong Zoua Her's leadership, continued to resist the Lao PDR government from the Phou Bia area. There were also other pockets of Hmong resistance inside Laos. Pa Kao Her left Phou Bia with 15 other Hmong Chao Fa soldiers on March 3, 1978 in order to seek international support, and swam across the Mekong River to Thailand on March 17 (it is possible that these dates may be slightly incorrect). They initially went to Nong Khai refugee camp and then a little more than a month after they moved to Ban Winai refugee camp in Loei Province, northeastern Thailand, but Pa Kao Her heard from a Thai intelligence official that it was unsafe for him to stay there, and near the end of 1978, after the Hmong New Year, he traveled to WTK, where he expected to receive support for the anti-Communist struggle. His deputy, Moua Nhia Long[54] had already visited the temple before, and it is rumored that Achan Chamroon told him that he was supposed to meet his leader, another Hmong, and asked that this man (apparently Pa Kao Her) be brought to the temple. Moua Nhia Long was close to Pa Kao Her until they separated into two different groups much later, in around 1997.[55]

WTK was not a typical Buddhist temple, and therefore was not accepted by the Sangha National Council. Similarly, the Chao Fa practiced Animism[56] like many other Hmong, but they added particular millenarian ideas, and a special Hmong script,[57] thus making them unacceptable to some 'mainstream' Hmong Animists. The fact that both groups could be characterized as outcasts facilitated the relationship that would eventually develop between the Chao Fa and WTK, even if their fundamental belief systems were different.

In January 1979 Pa Kao Her and his deputy, Moua Nhia Long, with support from the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok, flew to China from Bangkok for a short trip, to meet the Chinese. Soon after returning to Thailand Pa Kao Her and Moua Nhia Long led one of three groups of Hmong fighters on a 31-day walk to Muang La, Xipsongpanna, Yunnan Province China via Phongsaly Province, northern Laos. There they received military training and equipment, including arms, in support of resistance activities against the Lao PDR government and their Vietnamese allies. The Lao and especially the Vietnamese had fallen out badly with the Chinese after the Vietnamese army invaded Cambodia and ousted the Khmer Rouge, a close of ally of China.

Moua Nhia Long stayed in China to coordinate operations there and Pa Kao Her returned to Thailand to organize military operations and coordinate with Thai intelligence services from Thailand, especially in Chiang Khong, Chiang Rai Province, a key base for anti-Lao PDR government resistance in northern Laos. There were also bases in Phayao and Nan Provinces, Thailand (see Illustrations 6.7 and 6.8). The Chao Fa moved in and out of Thailand, although they generally left their weapons hidden in Laos, since guns were frequently confiscated, or at least temporarily taken away, by Thai authorities. Many Chao Fa insurgents mainly stayed in Laos, at places like Pha Mon in the early 1980s, near the border with Thailand.

The nature of the early post-1975 relations between Luang Por Chamroon and the Hmong is not clear, but by the late-1970s Hmong refugees from Laos, especially those involved in resisting the Lao PDR government, were frequently in contact with him. In fact, it seems likely that Chamroon made arrangements for Pa Kao Her and his soldiers to travel to China to receive support, via his high-level Thai military connections.[58] Still, according to one informant, Luang Por Chamroon was prone to exaggerate at times, so the full extent of his role remains unclear, although he was certainly involved in a significant way. Kittivuddho may have helped Luang Por Chamroon make contact with Chinese Embassy officials, since Kittivuddho




*Figure 6.7* Ethnic Liberation Organization of Laos (ELOL) forces under Pa Kao Her in April 1983. According to the Lao writing on the photo, the number of soldiers were being inspected at the time the photo was taken [complements of Bee Moua/Hmong Archives].



*Figure 6.8* Pa Kao Her conducts an Animist ceremony for ELOL soldiers located along the Laos-Thailand border, early 1980s [complements of Bee Moua/Hmong Archives].

was more involved in supporting anti-Vietnamese insurgents along the Cambodia-Thailand border, whereas Luang Por Chamroon was more supportive of anti-Vietnamese groups active along the Laos-Thailand border.

In 1979 the role of WTK in relation to the Hmong took a twist when the Thai royal family apparently requested support from Luang Por Chamroon to help stop the Hmong from planting opium along the borders in northern Thailand. General Kriangsak Chomanan, who had orchestrated a successful coup in 1977, was Prime Minister at the time, and it was apparently feared that allies of Kriangsak, especially the infamous Chiang Rai, Thailand-based Shan opium trader, Khun Sa, were taking advantage of the situation to support Kriangsak, and according to some, threaten the very existence of the monarchy.[59] Chao Fa Ying Galyani Niwatana (commonly known as *Phaphinang*), the older sister of the ninth King of Thailand, came to WTK personally (there is a photo of her meeting with Luang Por Chamroon). According to a WTK monk, her objective in visiting was to appeal for the temple to help cure Hmong addicts, with the ultimate goal of ending opium production along the border, and thus the threat to the country and ultimately to the monarchy. Being a strong supporter of King, Luang Por Chamroon is believed to have agreed to do what he could.

Pa Kao Her did not spend extended periods in the WTK area. He came and went, usually not spending more than a day or two per trip at or near the temple. The present abbot of WTK, Achan Boonsong, did not

remember his name, but did identify him as being the leader of the Hmong when shown a photo of Pa Kao. Pa Kao probably spent most of his time in the border region, or inside Laos conducting operations. When he did come to WTK, he mainly conversed with Luang Por Chamroon personally, and possibly also with the African-American monk, Gordon Baltimore.[60] A former member of the Thai special forces who worked closely with Luang Por Chamroon was also intimately involved.

Most of the Thai monks at WTK who were resident during the same time as large numbers of Hmong remember surprisingly few of the names of the Hmong. They claim that it is hard to recall Hmong names. The main Hmong man who the monks remember was known as "Pracha" in Thai. Based at the temple as Pa Kao Her's representative since 1984, after he returned from China, he acted as the liaison between the Hmong and WTK. Later, a Hmong man revealed that Pracha was none other than Moua Nhia Long.

In the mid-1980s Moua Nhia Long was resident at WTK, initially with two or three other Hmong families. Moua Nhia Long had gone to China with Pa Kao Her, but later coordinated the transfer of rice and other provisions from the temple to insurgents on the frontline. It is unclear whether there were any arms transfers or not, but it seems likely that there were. There was a bomb threat against him when Moua Nhia Long lived near the market at WTK in the 1990s. However, one of his wives noticed the bomb before it detonated, and in the end the police were able to disarm it. The culprits could well have been hired by the Lao PDR government to attack anti-government dissidents such as Moua Nhia Long.

Beginning in 1978 and continuing for the next few years, WTK assisted Hmong located at Ban Vinai refugee camp in Loei Province by sending vehicles to pick them up. According to Achan Boonsong, these Hmong were picked up for drug treatment every week or two, with over 20 being transported to WTK each trip. It would appear, however, that the vehicles were primarily, or at least partially, sent to pick up Hmong Chao Fa resistance fighters. They were transported to WTK and then later to Chiang Khong, on the Thailand-Laos border, where they organized anti-Communist resistance activities inside Laos. Many also continued from there to China for training. Getting Hmong out of Ban Vinai was not easy, but the operations were facilitated by the well-known anti-Communist *Kathing Daeng* (Red bulls) far right-wing leader and special military intelligence colonel Sutsai Hatsadin, who was also with the powerful National Internal Security Council in Thailand, and was close to Luang Por Chamroon.[61] Colonel Sutsai wrote out small notes of recommendation, and these were effective in ensuring that nobody obstructed operations. Thus, WTK played an important logistical role in support of Pa Kao Her and his followers. Chamroon himself also apparently advised the National Internal Security Council and Sutsai Hatsadin is considered to have been a key supporter of Pa Kao Her by his oldest son, Tou Her.[62]

In 1984, relations between Thailand and the Lao PDR severely deteriorated and led to serious armed conflict along the border between the two countries, which fought over three small border villages along the border between Uttaradit Province, Thailand and Pak Lay District, Xayaboury Province in Laos. In particular, Pa Kao's ELOL was recruited by the Thais to take up frontline positions against the Pathet Lao. Later, in 1984–1985 large number of Hmong who had assisted the Thais in fighting against the Lao in Nan arrived at WTK. The Thai had apparently promised them Thai citizenship, if they helped, but according to a monk at WTK, "Once the fighting was over the promise was not fulfilled. This left the Hmong who had fought with nowhere to go, so Luang Por Chamroon helped them by opening up temple land to them."

In December 1987, conflict between Thailand and Laos erupted again when the Thai military decided to occupy another disputed village, Ban Rom Klao, raising a Thai flag over it, and claiming that it was in Chat Trakan District, Phitsanulok Province, while the Lao insisted that it was in Boten District, Xayaboury Province. Once again the Hmong were recruited to support the Thais, this time by those under the command of General Chaovalit Yongchaiyudh, the adopted son (*look liang* in Thai) of the Lao Luang Phrabang prince, Chao Phetsarath. Members of Vang Pao's ULNLF were positioned on the frontline, while soldiers under the command of Colonel Lee Lao, a separate group, succeeded in sneaking into Laos and blowing up a key supply bridge. ELOL Chao Fa fighters were also apparently recruited, although negotiations occurred before the mission to block Lao supply lines inside Laos could take place. Fighting finally calmed down on February 19, 1988 when a cease-fire was agreed upon between the Thai and Lao governments.

Just a few months later, after a national election, the Chatchai Choonhaven government came to power on August 4, 1988. Thailand's foreign policy soon changed, as already discussed, and using Thai soil to fight against the Communists in Lao became increasingly difficult. It was around this time that more Hmong people started coming to WTK.

As dissident Lao military operations declined along the border in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and all the refugee camps closed down, a large number of additional Hmong arrived at WTK. In 1991 the ELOL also changed its name to the Chao Fa Democratic Party. Some came from the Ban Vinai refugee camp, which was closed in 1993. Many residents of Ban Vinai and other camps, such as Chiang Kham, Phanat Nikom, and Nakorn Phanom, who did not want to return to Laos or immigrate to a third country ended up at WTK. At that point not only Chao Fa Democratic Party supporters became based there, but also supporters of Vang Pao's ULNLF and Lee Lao as well, and later some Thai Hmong also went there to engage in business.

Just prior to the number of Hmong at WTK increasing dramatically in around 1990, the nephew of Luang Por Chamroon, Manop Parnchand

(his nickname was Piak), who was originally from Klong San, in Bangkok, returned from spending almost a decade working as a cook at a Thai restaurant in Philadelphia, USA. At the request of Luang Por Chamroon, Piak began working for the temple in order to handle affairs related to the Hmong (see Illustration 6.9). Although he apparently largely followed Chamroon's orders to help the Hmong, including condemning some who tried to cheat them, he also allegedly took advantage of the Hmong at times.[63] The relationship between the temple and the Hmong was complicated.

One of the aspects of the practice at WTK that at least some people in Phraphuttabat District are uncomfortable about is the fact that women are allowed to make offerings and exchange things directly with men, something that is normally prohibited in Thai Theravāda Buddhism. Phra Gordon Baltimore, the American monk, even had a sexual relationship

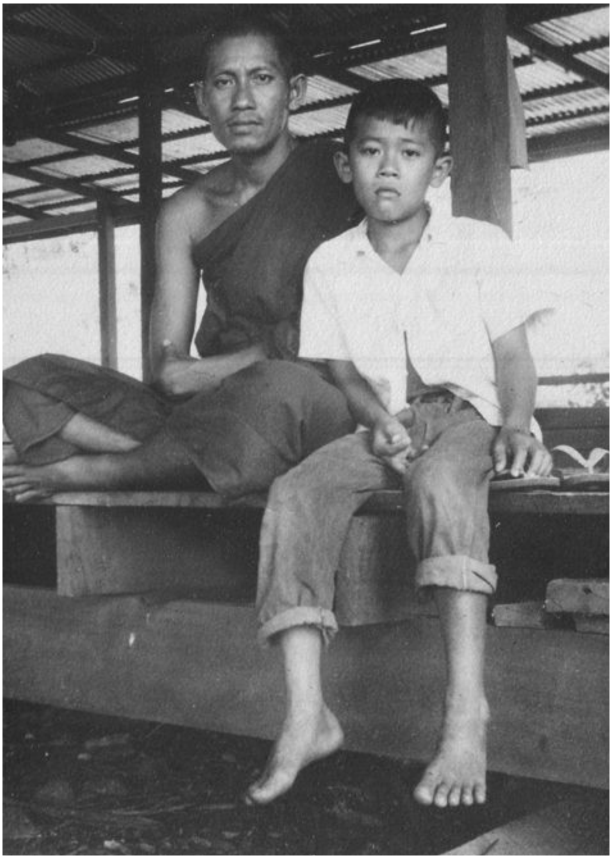


*Figure 6.9* Chamroon Parnchand with Manop Parnchand, as a child, in the 1960s, Tham Krabok temple, Thailand [complements of Joe Parnchand].

with a Hmong woman, and he fathered a child as a result.[64] Surprisingly, he was not forced to disrobe, possibly because of his special relationship with Chamroon.[65]

Pa Kao Her was not the only Hmong resistance leader to interact with Luang Por Chamroon. Others, such as Colonel Lee Lao, also visited Luang Por Chamroon frequently, and like Pa Kao, his communications were apparently almost exclusively with Luang Por Chamroon. Luang Por Chamroon also provided support, albeit much more limited, to other Hmong and non-Hmong anti-Communist Lao groups, including Vang Pao's ULNLF, which started cooperating more with Luang Por Chamroon in the late 1980s and early 1990s as support from the Thai government declined and the refugee camps in Thailand, another important source of insurgent support, began closing. Luang Por Chamroon had a lot of good contacts and helped broker various arrangements beneficial to anti-Lao PDR government groups, whether with Thai officials, the Chinese, or sympathetic resistance groups in Cambodia. In one case he helped broker the sale of some allegedly nuclear material that people who were in contact with him were trying to sell.

Luang Por Chamroon also supported the Lao People's National Liberation Front (LPNLF), a largely ethnic Lao resistance organization. Saveng Vongsavath, previously a full colonel in the RLA, and the military commander of the LPNLF, told me that he visited WTK a few times. Luang Por Chamroon provided him with some food and supplies, all of which could be labeled as 'humanitarian support,' even though the food was supporting violent anti-Communist missions inside Laos.

In the early 1990s Khamphoui Sisavatdy, the political leader of the LPNLF, also entered into discussions with Luang Por Chamroon in relation to WTK producing stone "*phrabang*" posture Buddhist images, larger ones for putting on tables and smaller ones for wearing around one's neck. Colonel Bounleut Saycocie was at WTK when Luang Por Chamroon spoke on the phone with Khamphoui, and helped facilitate communications. The idea was that WTK would produce the images and send them to the LPNLF in the US, and they in turn would sell them in the Lao community to raise funds for the LPNLF. However, after initial discussions the plan did not move forward, as Khamphoui heard that police or military had moved into the area shortly after their long distance telephone discussion, so he chose to not make contact again.

## RESOLVING THE HMONG 'PROBLEM' AT WTK THROUGH RESETTLEMENT IN THE US

In the early 1990s the Hmong population at WTK may have reached as high as 40,000.[66] There was not, however, enough space for everyone, so many eventually settled elsewhere, including in the seventeen northern provinces of Thailand, where it was possible to integrate into Thai Hmong villages. Some younger people also went to work elsewhere, and still others stayed

out of WTK to conduct insurgent activities directed against the Lao PDR government. In 1992 many Chao Fa and their supporters, including women, children and elderly people, moved from Thailand to Xayaboury Province in northern Laos, where they continued to fight against the Lao PDR government. Luang Por Chamroon contacted Thai officials and helped to arrange for some of the Hmong to obtain Thai citizenship, especially those who had fought on behalf of the Thais in 1984 and 1987. He was, however, only partially successful, although many eventually did gain Thai citizenship.

Some Hmong dreamed of having their own place, and Luang Por Chamroon tried to help them realize their goal, but he could not finish his work. Many Hmong believe that this is why he died, because he could not complete the task of helping the Hmong. Similarly, a Hmong man told me that Luang Por Chamroon was linked with the Hmong. That is, when he became angry with a Hmong he would later suffer aching bones or other physical ailments. However, when I asked Achan Boonsong about this later, he replied that this is true for anyone, not just the Hmong. That is, the principle of karma applies to everyone, and that getting angry with someone, regardless of whether they are Hmong or not, would have karmic implications. In any case, Luang Por Chamroon was able to protect the Hmong for many years, due to his "charismatic authority," as well as his close connections, including with the Thai Royal family.[67]

After Luang Por Chamroon passed away, Luang Por Charoen (Phonratnkassapa), who knew much less about the Hmong than his brother, was reportedly less willing and able to protect the Hmong at WTK, and in April 2003 a Thai military joint task force moved in to take control. Although Luang Por Chamroon had argued for years that the Hmong were from Thailand and not Laos, it became clear that the vast majority were actually from Laos.[68] There had been a lot of bad press about the Hmong at WTK. Some were accused of dealing in illegal drugs[69]; others were suspected of using the temple as a base to fight against the Lao PDR government. With WTK being unorthodox for most Thais, there were also other reasons for Thais to feel suspicious about the temple. Eventually this led 200 red beret-wearing soldiers to fence off the area populated by the Hmong. They then began the two-year process of screening all the inhabitants, although some escaped or were otherwise allowed to leave during this period.

One of the uncompleted tasks of WTK was the construction of an unusual concrete platform with a large rectangular rock in the center on a cement pedestal, and surrounded with 100 cement columns that looked very much like chairs (see Figure 6.11). Known as *lan chumnum* in Thai, or the "flat meeting place," construction apparently began in the early 2000s. According to a Hmong informant, a Hmong at WTK, possibly from the Her clan, who later emigrated to the US, dreamed of this, and told the monks that if they constructed it, WTK would be respected by the world. The monks agreed but the project was apparently not executed correctly, and has not been completed. Each of the concrete chair-like pillars has a name. Each

pillar was expected to either serve as a seat for key Hmong people to sit during meetings, or as pedestals for statues that were never added. Many Hmong believe that WTK is experiencing problems because the structure has not been completed, and because the Hmong were sent away by Luang Por Charoen from WTK. Some would still like to see the statues erected, including the center one of *Chao Vang Chu* (*Vaj Tswv*), the messianic king of the gods, who was believed to be the father of the king of the Hmong, *Tswb Choj*. Achan Vichit also told me that Achan Charoen had the idea to use the *lan chumnum* as a means for converting the Hmong from Animism to Buddhism, by encouraging the Hmong to respect the rectangular stone in the middle rather than spirits. It does not, however, appear that his plan

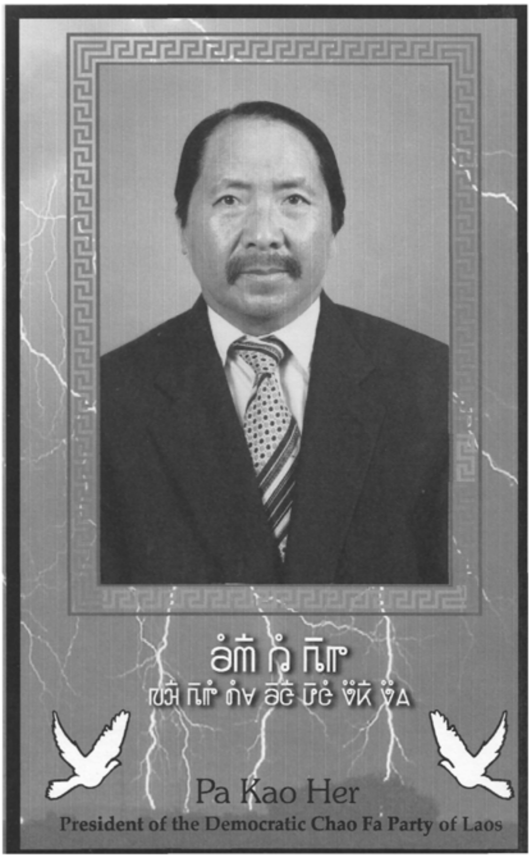



*Figure 6.10* Poster of Pa Kao Her, President of the Democratic Chao Fa Party of Laos, which was created after the Ethnic Liberation Organization of Laos was disbanded. Notice the 'Mother of Writing' script on the poster, as well as English.

was successful, as very few of the Hmong at WTK converted to Buddhism. Still, Buddhist influences on the Chao Fa are evident.

While Luang Por Chamroon was certainly committed to helping the Hmong, there were limits to what he was willing to do. As Achan Boonsong put it, "Wat Tham Krabok assisted the Hmong, but they only provided humanitarian support." By defining support for the Hmong as 'humanitarian,' such support could be discursively justified in relation to Buddhism, a point I have made elsewhere.[70]

## WTK'S SPECIAL RELATION WITH THE HMONG TODAY

The special and unusual relationship between the Hmong and Tham Krabok temple is linked to Luang Por Yai more than any others. Even today, whenever there is a ceremony related to Luang Por Yai at the temple an exceptionally large number of Hmong show up. While it can be said that a special relationship still exists between the Hmong and WTK, it is clearly not as close as it was when Luang Por Yai and Luang Por Chamroon were alive. When Luang Por Chamroon died his brother, Luang Por Charoen continued to assist the Hmong until his passing in 2008, but many believe he was less supportive



*Figure 6.11* The unfinished *lan chumnum* structure at Tham Krabok temple, Thailand, 2011 [photo by Ian Baird].

of the Hmong than his brother or aunt. Achan Boonsong claims that he still has a special relationship with the Hmong. He acknowledges missing the Hmong, but he also commented, in typical Buddhist fashion, "Where ever we stay is the same, there is just a different feeling." Hmong people still visit the temple, and possibilities for building a museum for recording the history of the many years that so many Hmong spent at WTK have been discussed.[71] There has also been controversy at WTK regarding the digging up of the graves of Hmong people who died there.

According to Achan Boonsong, one of the things that visiting Hmong frequently ask for is petrified wood from the area. Although the monks at WTK claim not to know the significance of this wood, they have acquired it to make rings, which they give to visiting Hmong. Achan Boonsong gave me four of these rings to give to interested Hmong from WTK in Wisconsin, US, where I live. He said the wood came from Nam Na Loi Subdistrict in Lopburi Province. A Hmong man told me that many Hmong believe Luang Por Yai's coffin was made of wood, and that all the wood used to make it, including the parts that were chipped off, eventually turned into stone. According to some Hmong, before passing away Luang Por Yai asked to be buried in a tree trunk. She apparently said that if the tree trunk rotted away, the Hmong would lose their chance for an independent homeland, but if the wood became petrified the Hmong would still have a chance to obtain a homeland. The link with Luang Por Yai's coffin makes the wood particularly valuable, even sacred, to the Hmong, although the monks at WTK claim that the petrified wood does not come from the coffin of Luang Por Yai. Her coffin was apparently made of teak. Today, many Hmong in the US believe that the petrified wood can protect people from misfortune.

Phra Joe Parnchand, Manop's son, told me, "I suspect that many Hmong will return to WTK in the future to show their respect for the people, like Luang Por Chamroon and my father, who helped them when they were here."

## CONCLUSIONS

One can see that Theravāda Buddhist monks were able to provide various kinds of support for militant insurgents involved in cross-border anti-government operations. Although WTK is no longer involved in assisting militant resistance movements, they were in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s when Luang Por Chamroon was abbot. While it is unclear whether he or other monks provided weapons to the Hmong insurgents, which would have violated the basic Buddhist vinaya, Luang Por Chamroon was certainly strongly anti-Communist, and he even argued in an interview with Thanakorn Suriyon that it is sometimes necessary to lie in order to support more important causes.[72]

In any case, the so-called 'humanitarian support' provided to Pa Kao Her and Moua Nhia Long of the ELOL/Chao Fa Democratic Party, as well as other Hmong and non-Hmong anti-Communist Lao groups, was as important for the insurgents as receiving guns or other direct military support. Crucially, Luang Por Chamroon used his extensive connections in far-right wing factions of the Thai police, military and Thai intelligence services to facilitate Pa Kao Her and his colleagues traveling to China for direct military training and received weapons and other supplies in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In addition, he provided the families of insurgents with a relatively safe place to stay, and he gave insurgents places to rest and recover after long and arduous missions inside Laos, as well as private and secure meeting places to have strategy and planning discussions, and to coordinate activities. Resistance groups also reportedly operated a small radio communications center near the temple. Crucially, he helped make connections with senior Thai military and intelligence officers, such as Sutsai Hatsadin, and even the Chinese Embassy. He lobbied for support for the Hmong insurgents. I have a photo of Pa Kao Her signing a cooperation agreement with Bounleut Saycocie, an ethnic Lao insurgent leader, and a Vietnamese anti-Communist insurgent leader, Nguyen Van Kim: the background of the photo clearly indicates that it was taken near a cave in the general vicinity of WTK. On the outskirts of the temple, insurgents also sometimes received training. In one case psychological training was provided by a Lao insurgent for Hmong soldiers working with Pa Kao Her. Clearly, the support provided by Luang Por Chamroon to dissidents, despite possibly not technically violating Buddhist vinaya, contradicted the spirit of those rules. Others, however, argue that Luang Por Chamroon's support of the anti-Communist movement was justifiable. Indeed, it is rarely easy to separate religious practices from larger societal conflicts, including political conflicts and ideas related to nationalism. Whatever one believes, this chapter has hopefully helped explain the special relationship between the Hmong and the Buddhist monks at WTK.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to the monks at WTK who assisted me in my investigations, especially Achan Boonsong Tanajaro, Achan Joe Parnchand, Achan Vichit Akhachitto (Tong), and Achan Ong-Art. I am also grateful for the assistance provided by Anna (a former patient at WTK), MacAlan Thompson, Joe Westermeyer, Pao Vue, Lee Long Fue, Tou Her, and Mai Na Lee, who all contributed in valuable ways. Other informants must necessarily remain unnamed. I benefited from comments on an early draft of this chapter by MacAlan Thompson, Martin Seeger, and Paul Hillmer. Thanks to Bee Moua/the Hmong Archives in St. Paul, Minnesota, for providing Figures 6.7 and 6.8.

## NOTES

1. Some authors have incorrectly spelt the name of the temple as "Wat Tan (or Than) Kha Bok" or "Wat Tan Kra Bok." See, for example, Joseph Westermeyer, *Poppies, Pipes, and People: Opium and Its Use in Laos* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1982).
2. The monks at WTK sometimes ran into trouble with police officers when they refused rides in vehicles. Luang Por Chamroon was apparently arrested once for refusing to enter a vehicle.
3. Technically, he is not the abbot (*chao awat* in Thai), but rather *phrathan khana song* (president of the Buddhist group/order), but in reality most know him as the abbot.
4. I will periodically refer to WTK as a *wat* or 'temple,' despite its ambiguous legal status.
5. Grit Grigoleit, "Coming Home? The Integration of Hmong Refugees from Wat Tham Krabok, Thailand, into American Society," *Hmong Studies Journal* 7 (2006): 1–22.
6. Grigoleit, "Coming Home," 1–22; apparently members of the Her and Yang clans were particularly abundant amongst the Hmong at WTK.
7. Tessa J. Bartholomeusz, *In Defense of Dharma. Just-War Ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka* (Routledge Curzon: London and New York, 2002); Tessa J. Bartholomeusz and Chandra R. De Silva (eds.), *Buddhist Fundamentalism and Minority Identities in Sri Lanka* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); Stanley J. Tambiah, *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Stanley J. Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed? Religion, Politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Daniel Kent, "Onward Buddhist Soldiers: Preaching to the Sri Lankan Army," in *Buddhist Warfare,* ed. Michael Jerryson and Mark Juergensmeyer (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 157–177; H.L. Seneviratne, "Religion and Conflict: The Case of Buddhism in Sri Lanka," in *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik,* ed., D. Johnston (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Elisabeth J. Harris, "Buddhism in War: A Study of Cause and Effect from Sri Lanka," *Culture and Religion* 2/2 (2002): 197–222; Ananda Abeysekara, "The Saffron Army, Violence, Terror(ism): Buddhism, Identity, and Difference in Sri Lanka," *Numen* 48/1 (2001): 1–46.
8. Juliane Schober, "Buddhism, Violence and the State in Burma (Myanmar) and Sri Lanka," in Disrupting Violence: Religion and Conflict in South and Southeast Asia, ed. L. Cady and S. Simon (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 51–69.
9. Ian G. Baird, "Lao Buddhist Monk Involvement in Political and Militant Resistance to the Lao People's Democratic Government since 1975," *Journal of Asian Studies* 71(3) (Forthcoming, August 2012).
10. Ibid; Michael Jerryson, "Appropriating a Space for Violence: State Buddhism in Southern Thailand," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40:1 (2009): 33–57.
11. Michael Jerryson, "Introduction," in *Buddhist Warfare*, ed. Michael Jerryson and Mark Juergensmeyer (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010a), 3–16; Michael Jerryson, "Militarizing Buddhism: Violence in Southern Thailand," in *Buddhist Warfare*, ed. Michael Jerryson and Mark Juergensmeyer (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010b), 181–209; Michael Jerryson and Mark Juergensmeyer (eds.), *Buddhist Warfare* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
12. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk who Stops Drug Addiction, Samnak Song Tham Krabok, Phaphuttabat District, Saraburi Province," (In Thai), (no

date) p. 19, based on an extended interview with Luang Por Chamroon Parnchand.

13. Jim Placzek, "Bhikkhuni Ordination and the Thai Forest Tradition." Abstracts, The 11th International Conference on Thai Studies. Visions for the Future (Bangkok: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, 2011), 120; Martin Seeger, "Reversal of Female Power, Transcendentality, Supernaturality and Gender in Thai Buddhism: Hagiographies and Veneration of Thai Buddhist Female Saints." Abstracts, The 11th International Conference on Thai Studies. Visions for the Future (Bangkok: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, 2011), 185.
14. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk who Stops Drug Addiction" (In Thai).
15. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk who Stops Drug Addiction" (In Thai).
16. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk who Stops Drug Addiction" (In Thai).
17. Phra Joe Parnchand, *pers. comm.*, July 2011.
18. Westermeyer, *Poppies, Pipes and People.*
19. Kenn Finlayson, "Operation White Star: Prelude to Vietnam Special Warfare," 2002, http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HZY/is_2_15/ai_89859337.
20. William M. Leary, "Supporting the "Secret War" CIA Air Operations in Laos 1955–1974," 2002, http://www.air-america.org/About/History.shtml.
21. Leary, Supporting the "Secret War."
22. Leary, Supporting the "Secret War."
23. Thak Chaloemtiarana, *Thailand: The Politics of Despotic Paternalism* (Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1979).
24. Interestingly, however, it appears that Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat later purchased thirty *rai* of land and donated it the WTK temple, indicating the odd ways that politics can change in Thailand. It was not unusual for political rivals to mend relations after major political struggles.
25. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk Who Stops Addiction" (In Thai).
26. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk Who Stops Addiction" (In Thai).
27. Westermeyer, *Poppies, Pipes and People.*
28. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk Who Stops Addiction" (In Thai).
29. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk who Stops Drug Addiction" (In Thai).
30. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk who Stops Drug Addiction" (In Thai).
31. There is an exception to this rule. If a monk is unconscious of otherwise unaware of his situation, the monk can be transported to a hospital by a vehicle.
32. Although in the early years these trips were often quite long, later they became shorter, generally not more than 15 days long, since there were a lot of patients waiting for the monks at the temple (Thanakorn Suriyon, no date).
33. "WTK: Some Information about the Monastery." http://www.WTK-monastery.org/klosteren1.html, accessed August 15, 2011.
34. Mai Na Lee, *pers. comm.*, November 23, 2011.
35. Westermeyer, *Poppies, Pipes and People.*
36. William A. Smalley, Chia Koua Vang, and Gnia Yee Yang, *Mother of Writing. The Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
37. The source for this information reportedly heard the late Dr. Charles Weldon tell him about this when he was still alive. However, Pa Kao Her's eldest son, Tou Her, and one of Pa Kao's brothers claim that Pa Kao first traveled to WTK in 1978. This seems likely to be the case.
38. Westermeyer, *Poppies, Pipes and People.*

39. WTK can even help break addiction to tobacco (Thanakorn Suriyon, no date) although some monks there do smoke cigarettes.
40. Grigoleit, "Coming Home," 1–22.
41. Somboon Suksamran, "Buddhism and Politics in Thailand: A Study of Socio-Political Change and Political Activism of the Thai Sangha," (Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 1982).
42. Somboon Suksamran, "Buddhism and Politics in Thailand."
43. See Katherine Bowie, *Rituals of National Loyalty: An Anthropology of the State and the Village Scout Movement in Thailand,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
44. Charles F. Keyes, "Political Crisis and Militant Buddhism," in *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma*, ed. B.L. Smith (Chambersburg, PA: Anima, 1978).
45. Nakhonekham Bouphanouvong, *Sixteen Years in the Land of Death. Revolution and Reeducation in Laos* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2003); Khamphanh Thammakhanty, *Get to the Trunk, Destroy the Roots. The Fall from Monarchy to Socialism* (Portland: Self-published, 2004); Christopher Kremmer, *Bamboo Palace: Discovering the Lost Dynasty of Laos* (Sydney: Flamingo, 2003).
46. Hjorleifur Jonsson, "War's Ontogeny: Militias and Ethnic Boundaries in Laos and Exile," *Southeast Asian Studies* 47:2 (2009): 125–149.
47. Later, the name would be changed to the Democratic Chao Fa Party of Laos (see Illustration 6.10). Pa Kao Her was born along the Laos-Vietnam border, in Nong Het District, Xieng Khouang Province on February 2, 1943. He always remembered his year of birth because it was the same year the Japanese took control of Laos. However, the Japanese actually took control of Laos with a *coup de force* in 1945. He was assassinated in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand on October 23, 2002. His Thai name was "Cheng Sai."
48. Vang Chu Chi Vue apparently never met Shong Lue Yang, but became the spiritual leader of the Chao Fa. He was apparently the one that invented the Chao Fa flag. He blessed Chao Fa soldiers going on dangerous missions, etc.
49. Paul Hillmer, *A People's History of the Hmong* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2009).
50. Achan Boonsong Tanajaro, *pers. comm.,* August 23, 2011.
51. Christopher E. Goscha, "Revolutionizing the Indochinese Past: Communist Vietnam's 'Special' Historiography on Laos," in *Contesting Visions of the Lao Past. Lao Historiography at the Crossroads*, ed. Christopher E. Goscha and Soven Ivarsson (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2003), 265–295.
52. Ian G. Baird, *Various Forms of Colonialism: The Social and Spatial Reorganisation of the Brao in Southern Laos and Northeastern Cambodia*, PhD dissertation (Vancouver, Canada: Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences, The University of British Columbia, 2008).
53. See Hillmer, *A People's History of the Hmong.*
54. Moua Nhia Long's sister was the second wife of Shong Lue Yang.
55. Moua Nhia Long died of illness in Chiang Rai, Thailand in the early 2000s.
56. Note that I have specifically chosen to capitalize Animism.
57. Smalley *et al. Mother of Writing.*
58. For example, General Athit Kamlang Ek, the former head of Military Region 2 and was head of the overall Thai military, was photographed visiting WTK to donate money to the temple, and many other senior Thai military figures have been known to visit the temple.
59. Khun Sa was expelled Thailand in 1982 after Prem Tinsulanonda succeeded Kriangsak Chomnanan as Prime Minister.

60. Gordon Baltimore died at WTK in early 2011, at the age of seventy-two, after spending over thirty years at the temple as a monk. He probably assisted Luang Por Chamroon in some of his communications with the Hmong resistance. He was ranked #16 amongst monks at WTK when he passed away.
61. According to Achan Boonsong Tanajaro, Sutsai Hatsadin visited WTK frequently (*pers. comm.,* August 23, 2011).
62. Tou Her, *pers. comm.*, November 20, 2011.
63. Manop Parnchand died in a car accident in 2010 at the age of fifty-nine years old. He went unconscious at the wheel of the car, apparently due to being a diabetic.
64. This has led to some Hmong to believe that monks at WTK are allowed to have 'wives,' provided that they do not live at the temple. There are even persistent rumors about Luang Por Chamroon having a wife who lived outside of the temple area. In fact, he was married and had two children before ordaining as a monk (Joseph Westermeyer, 1980, "Two Neo Buddhist Cults in Asia: The Influence of the Founder and the Social Context on Religious Movements," *Journal of Psychological Anthropology* 3: 143–152), but it is unclear what his relationship, if any, was with his wife after he ordained. The present abbot of WTK, Achan Boonsong, denies monks at Tham Krabok are allowed to have wives or any sexual relations when ordained. He and others point to the fact that monks have been expelled from the temple in the past for related offences, including having sexual relations with women and consuming alcohol.
65. Gordon Baltimore, a former member of the US military (I have seen his discharge papers), allegedly came to WTK by accident after his truck had flat tires (all four apparently went flat) near the temple entrance. Gordon claimed he was going to the Thai-Cambodian border to send weapons to Cambodian insurgents along the border. He reportedly decided to stay for his life. Other observers, however, wonder if this story is "too good to be true," and suggest that Gordon was sometimes known to exaggerate. There appear to be various discrepancies regarding different versions of his personal history.
66. Grigoleit, "Coming Home," 1–22.
67. Grigoleit, "Coming Home," 1–22.
68. Grigoleit, "Coming Home," 1–22.
69. Grigoleit, "Coming Home," 1–22; Pao Lor, "A Photo Essay of the Hmong Experience at WTK in Thailand," *Hmong Studies Journal* 10 (2009): 1–41.
70. Ian G. Baird, "Lao Buddhist Monks."
71. As of July 2011, there were just over 100 people in twenty-nine Hmong families still living on WTK temple land.
72. Thanakorn Suriyon, "A Monk Who Stops Drug Addiction" (In Thai).

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# 7 A Closer Look at Zen at War

## The Battlefield Chaplaincy of Shaku Sōen in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905)

*Micah Auerback*

## INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the US military at last embraced Buddhism. In July of that year, the Navy commissioned its first full-time Buddhist chaplain, Jeanette G. Shin.[1] This practice, though new to the military of the US, was hardly unknown outside it. Shin's ordination arguably marked an innovation in a little-known but long tradition of battlefield military chaplains ordained in Japanese Buddhist denominations, even if the actual context of that chaplaincy differed considerably between Japan and the US. Readers conscious of the contentious position of Yasukuni Shrine (Yasukuni Jinja 靖国神社) in early twenty-first century Japan might understandably assume that Japan's "native religion" of Shintō 神道 historically monopolized the pastoral care of, and memorial rites for, Japanese soldiers. In fact, Buddhist groups took leading roles in those tasks under the Empire of Great Japan (Dai-Nihon Teikoku 大日本帝国, 1889–1945). Buddhist military chaplaincy (*jūgun fukyō* 従軍布教; literally "promulgation of the Teaching following the military") constituted one important area of collaboration between powerful Buddhist denominations and military authorities.

Given the relative lack of research on this topic in either English or Japanese, it remains difficult to estimate even roughly the overall scale and scope of modern Buddhist chaplaincy at any time in this period. To be sure, the Meiji period (1868–1912) is recent and well documented, and a relatively substantial body of scholarship treats its military history, both in Japanese and English. However, Meiji Buddhist chaplaincy of any kind remains only incompletely treated in Japanese, and it has only recently registered as a distinct topic of interest in the work of Anglophone historians.[2] The study of such chaplaincy promises to illuminate a number of issues, only some of which can be treated in the present article: relations between religious groups and the modern nation-state; the adaptation of Buddhist discourses concerning violence to serve the demands of a modern military; and the ways in which individual chaplains brought their religious practice to bear in dealing with solders, on and off the battlefield.

This study treats texts written by one Japanese Buddhist cleric active as a battlefield chaplain in the Russo-Japanese War: Shaku Sōen 釈宗

演 (1860–1919), a high-ranking Zen cleric of the Rinzai denomination (Rinzai-shū 臨済宗). First, it surveys existing scholarship about Meiji Japanese Buddhism and war; next, it examines Sōen's biography and his wartime writings to present the scope of his battlefield chaplaincy; and finally, it concludes by treating some tensions inherent in his wartime writings. Sōen's chaplaincy—conducted on paper as much as in person—was largely devoted to calling for his audiences to manifest unwavering spiritual strength in battle. There are, however, also short episodes in which the narrative Sōen fails to manifest that strength, which stand out as curious, if sparse, anomalies. As the present study argues, though, these are less conscious efforts to present Sōen's human vulnerability, than results of tensions inherent in the very project of a Buddhist battlefield chaplaincy.

In short, this piece will revisit the apparent contradiction between an idealized vision of a peacefully enlightened Zen master, and the documented horrors of modern Japan's militarist aggression.[3] While it primarily treats Sōen's publications in Japanese, such contradictions are not difficult to find in the pronouncements of his translated for the Anglophone world, either.[4] As Judith Snodgrass has noted, the text of one of the talks that Sōen contributed to the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions asked plaintively, "And what is gained by war? Nothing; it only means the oppression of the weak by the strong; it simply means the fighting among brothers and the shedding of human blood. The stronger gains nothing while the weaker loses everything."[5] Back in the US in 1905, however, Sōen would offer a different message: "War is an evil and a great one, indeed. But war against evils must be unflinchingly prosecuted till we attain the final aim."[6] The present study will seek to account for Sōen without discounting either of these pronouncements, or reducing them to mere epiphenomena of Japan's transformation into an overseas empire in the years between his two trips.

In treating these apparent contradictions as tensions worthy of consideration in their own right, this study represents another effort to move beyond the impasse that has characterized the study of modern Japanese Buddhist involvement with military activities since the issue attained prominence in the 1970s. Both in Japanese and in English, such scholarship has sought sometimes to denounce those activities, and sometimes to exculpate or to recontextualize them, but not, on the whole, to investigate specific cases in detail. As with some other contentious cases of collaboration in the mid-twentieth century, consideration of wartime collaboration by Japanese Buddhist clerics has, for the most part, remained mired in questions of its legitimacy or propriety.

## PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

Such overtly normative stances have cast a long shadow over the limited body of research that has treated Meiji Buddhist military chaplaincy since the 1970s. To begin with, Japanese scholars have not even agreed that the military chaplaincy was always an authentically Buddhist occupation. For

instance, in his 1976 treatment of the Japanese Buddhist contribution to the war against Qing China (1894–1895), Yoshida Kyūichi (1915–2005) argued that Buddhist involvement with this war retained some principles that he classed as authentically Buddhist. These included a certain level of adherence to the precept against killing, and a willingness to perform memorial rites equally for both Japanese and non-Japanese soldiers. Yoshida argued, however, that Japanese Buddhist clerics neglected these principles in their involvement with the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). In this and subsequent twentieth-century wars, he concluded, "external pressure from the absolutist state and the decadence (*taihai* 退廃) of Buddhists themselves brought about a loss of religious faith (*shūkyōteki shinkōsei* 宗教的信仰性) on the battlefield and on the home front."[7] For reflective members of Yoshida's generation, who experienced the Fifteen-Year War (1931–1945) firsthand, the disavowal of the actions of the wartime state and its supporters would have held a special urgency.

Perhaps reflecting the authority of such pronouncements, research lagged, and it was only from the late 1980s onward that scholars in Japan began to consider battlefield Buddhist chaplaincy during the late Meiji decades. Based principally on periodicals published by some of Japan's larger Buddhist denominations, a small but pioneering body of scholarship in Japanese documented the alacrity with which these denominations officially endorsed their followers' participation in warfare.[8] This scholarship has also noted the speed and willingness with which individual Buddhist clerics volunteered for battlefield chaplaincy work, sometimes even before their denominations called upon them to join in Japan's military endeavors. There seems to have been no lack of interest in military chaplaincy: In the case of the Nichiren denomination, even after the Japanese government set limits to the number of chaplains who could accompany troops overseas in 1904, the number of willing volunteers well exceeded the quotas.[9] As these studies have also shown, clerics individually prominent in these denominations were often involved in outreach to soldiers.[10]

Kiba Akeshi's scholarship is particularly notable for its attention to the messages directed by Buddhist denominational authorities to recruits. Examining a published collection of war sermons (literally, "war Dharma talks," *sensō hōwa* 戦争法話), and a statement issued to military recruits by seven True Pure Land temples in the region around Kanazawa 金沢, Kiba showed that these two documents legitimized both killing and dying in combat by citing or paraphrasing a range of orthodox sources, including the *Ekkotarāgama* (Jpn. *Zōichi agongyō* 増一阿含経, T. 125); the *Net of Brahma Sūtra* (Jpn. *Bonmōkyō* 梵網経, T. 1484); the *Sūtra on Contemplating the Buddha of Measureless Life* (Jpn. *Kanmuryōjukyō* 観無量寿経, T. 365); and even the famous aphorism of Shandao 善導 (613–681), "A sharp sword is none other than the name of the Buddha Amitābha."[11] After identifying over a dozen other documents similar to these two, Kiba further demonstrated that each of the two major True Pure Land denominations

also produced pamphlets for direct distribution to soldiers during the Russo-Japanese War. According to the statistics that he cited, some 780,328 copies of such pamphlets were distributed by the Honganji denomination, and some 526,355 by the Ōtani denomination.[12]

In Anglophone scholarship, critical attention to the relationship between Japanese Buddhism and modern Japanese overseas aggression grew dramatically in the 1990s. In 1997, Brian Daizen Victoria's mass-circulation *Zen at War* alerted a wide readership to the pervasive, largely uncontested, and apparently enthusiastic cooperation of some leaders in the modern Japanese Zen Buddhist community with Japan's wartime mobilization through 1945.[13] Although *Zen at War* has been critiqued in both English and Japanese, it still poses problems that students of Zen Buddhism have only just begun to confront.[14] Noteworthy as one response is Christopher Ives' 2009 study, *Imperial-Way Zen: Ichikawa Hakugen's Critique and Lingering Questions for Buddhist Ethics*.[15] Engaging deeply with the post-war writings of the Zen cleric and antiwar activist Ichikawa Hakugen (1902–1986), this book positions modern Zen wartime cooperation in its long historical context, and prescriptively looks to the Zen heritage for resources to insure a more peaceful future. Chaplaincy per se, however, does not rank among its major concerns. For its part, Victoria's study briefly covers Sōen's chaplaincy, as well as adducing several different authors' recollections of the roles played by Buddhism on the battlefields of the Russo-Japanese War, but it does not attempt to offer a comprehensive treatment of the topic.[16]

Existing scholarship in both Japanese and English, then, has made a number of valuable accomplishments, but primarily by focusing on the pronouncements of high-ranking Buddhist figures with only limited involvement, if any, in chaplaincy. This work has contributed to a sense that the chief modes of Buddhist complicity in the war effort were domestic and ideological. Needless to say, some very basic questions remain. For one, what general picture of chaplaincy would emerge from a focus on other sources—for instance, from documents produced by the clerics who acted as chaplains, rather than descriptions found within official denominational organs? Within these sources, what activities characterize the normative vision of chaplaincy? To what degree do these sources present that normative vision as having been fulfilled? Because it is well documented but still incompletely studied, the case of Shaku Sōen as military chaplain makes for a fertile area of inquiry.

## SHAKU SHŌEN

An existing corpus of published material in both Japanese and English treats Sōen's life and work. Readers interested in an overview of his prodigiously energetic and well-documented career may refer to it.[17] Suffice it to say here that Sōen was undoubtedly one of most widely traveled and cosmopolitan

clerics of his day. Unlike most Buddhist clerics of his generation, he attended a secular educational institution—modern Keiō Gjuku University 慶應義塾大学—although he did not graduate from it.[18] After leaving Keiō, in 1887, Sōen undertook an extraordinary journey to British-occupied Ceylon, where he trained in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition until 1889.

Today, Sōen remains relatively familiar in the Anglophone world because he visited the US as one of the Japanese Buddhist representatives to the Chicago Parliament of World Religions in 1893. Soon after his return to Japan from Manchuria in 1904, he made another trip to the US in 1905, this time for a prolonged stay in San Francisco. In 1906, his circuitous journey back to Japan took him again to Illinois, and this time through much of the eastern US, thence to Europe and India. A collection of lectures given during this sojourn—translated and heavily redacted by his disciple, D.T. Suzuki—was published as early as 1906, becoming the first book to be published about Zen in the English language.[19] If the popular magazine *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* is any index to the interests of a powerful segment of the contemporary US. Buddhist community, then Sōen retains some relevance. In "Apology of a Buddhist Soldier," a piece contributed to the April 1996 issue of *Tricycle*, a former US counterintelligence officer prominently used the example of Sōen's military chaplaincy to suggest that Buddhism, like Christianity, admits of the legitimacy of "just wars."[20]

At the time of his service as a military chaplain, Sōen was already forty-six years old, and he simultaneously held abbacies at two of the most important temples in the world of Japanese Rinzai Zen, the Kenchōji建長寺 and the Engakuji円覚寺. The high standing that Sōen enjoyed in the Zen community is strongly reflected in his written account of his chaplaincy—not only in the enthusiastic groups of monastics and lay followers who appear to greet Sōen at seemingly every train stop from Kamakura onward, but also in the very fact of his appointment to work directly under Prince Sadanaru 貞愛親王 (1858–1923) of the imperial house of Fushimi, a member of the royalty who was then in service as a general, and who later rose to the rank of field marshal.

In keeping with his high rank, even on the battlefield, Sōen was accompanied by attendants and was shielded from the dangers threatening a typical infantryman. Other clerics would have been less fortunate. By 1904, Buddhist clerics had long ceased to be eligible for deferrals from Japan's universal male military conscription, meaning that most clerics would presumably have been drafted for service as regular soldiers.[21] Nor would most chaplains have shared in Sōen's privileged status. One Manchurian encounter mentioned in passing by Sōen involves his meeting with a fellow Japanese cleric of the Sōtō Zen denomination (Sōtō-shū 曹洞宗), Inoue Shūten 井上秀天 (1880–1945). Inoue had been dispatched as a chaplain by his denominational authorities in 1904, at the age of twenty-four, and was serving as an interpreter attached to the Eleventh Army Division when Sōen met him.[22] Until Sōen, who never explicitly renounced his support

for Japan's overseas military actions, Inoue returned to Japan to become a socialist and a pacifist. Inoue's reaction to chaplaincy was highly unusual, but it suffices to imply that Sōen's reactions to the battlefield were not wholly determined by his function as a chaplain.

Given his distinct background and high position, Sōen can in no sense serve as a representative of the conduct of Meiji Buddhist military chaplaincy. However, his story may suggest something of the possibilities and limitations circumscribing even chaplains with considerable cultural capital and financial resources.

## THE DIARY OF SUBJUGATING DEMONS

Sōen not only kept a personal record of his time in Manchuria, but also actively worked to disseminate it on his return to Japan. Late in 1904, well before the conclusion of the war in September 1905, he published his *Diary of Subjugating Demons* (*Gōma nisshi* 降魔日史; henceforth, *Diary*).[23] This account of his chaplaincy with the Japanese First Army Division in Manchuria spans the period from March 12 to July 25 of 1904. In considering this source, it is useful to remember that, unlike many of its global counterparts, the diary form in Japanese letters has not necessarily functioned as a forum for private confession or introspection. Instead, from the ancient period onward, many Japanese works *circulated* in something like the English diary form—if at times only in limited ways—filling such varied roles as object of literary appreciation, manual for proper ritual practice, travelogue, and record of official transactions.

Despite its evident importance as a rare firsthand account of Buddhist chaplaincy in Japan, and its historical value as a primary text in the life of one of modern Japan's outstanding Zen figures, the *Diary* remains incompletely studied in both Japanese and English. Most Japanese biographical summaries of Sōen treat his time in Manchuria in the briefest of terms. Even when they do discuss it, they have typically used his correspondence from the battlefield to emphasize the physical hardship of his service.[24] One exception to this tendency is Inoue Zenjō's laudatory biography of Shaku Sōen, published in 2000. Inoue's biography treats the months of Sōen's military chaplaincy almost entirely through a series of short excerpts taken from the *Diary*.[25] Nonetheless, Inoue's treatment is strictly chronological, not thematic, and does little to put the individual episodes into a broader context. In English, Michel Mohr's 2010 article constitutes the first scholarly treatment of the *Diary* as a text in its own right.[26]

The full title of the *Diary* is telling for its effort to align Sōen's military service with broader themes in traditional Buddhist cosmology. The Sino-Japanese *gōma* 降魔, "to subjugate demons" or "to subjugate Māra," represents one of eight phases or scenes (*hassō* 八相) commonly highlighted in biographies of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. This is the Buddha-to-

be's defeat of Māra, demon king of the sixth heaven of the Realm of Desire, which immediately preceded the Buddha's awakening. Shaku Sōen drew on the biography of the Buddha, and the notion of demonic forces threatening cosmic order, in selecting the term *gōma*. Shortly after his return from the battlefield to Japan, Sōen published an article in the September 1904 edition of the popular Japanese general-interest magazine *Taiyō* 太陽 (*The Sun*). Here he opined, "The only element that truly permeates the entire life of the Buddha is the two Chinese characters *gōma*." After enumerating the major moments in the life of the Buddha, Sōen summed up the entire career of the Buddha as follows: "In short, [these actions] emerge from the Buddha's great compassion, which attempted to cut down these great enemies, to subjugate (*gōbuku* 降伏) the *aśuras*, *rākṣasas*, evil spirits, and the entire tribe of demons, and to manifest the great brilliance [of awakening] for the sake of sentient beings."[27]

Sōen went on to expound with dramatic flourish the detailed course of a cosmic battle witnessed by the Buddha-to-be while he was engaged in ascetic training on Mount Dantalōka (Dandokusen 檀特山). There he beheld Māra's near-defeat of Indra, king of the gods. In our world, Sōen dilated, the demon king Māra is personified by none other than Imperial Russia, seeking to swallow up the entire globe and to plunge it into darkness. Thus, he contended, "we must call [this conflict, i.e., the Russo-Japanese War] not just a great just war (*gisen* 義戦) in this world (*sekai* 世界), but rather a full-fledged great battle to subjugate demons throughout the [entire] cosmos (*uchū* 宇宙)."[28] Presumably, it is this urgent sense of participation in a vast conflict that accounts for his choice of title for the *Diary*.[29] When Sōen published the *Diary*, then, he had already assured the reading public of its universal significance.

## THE CONTENT OF SŌEN'S CHAPLAINCY

Sōen carried his existing social identity to the battlefields of Manchuria. To be certain, he does complain of material privation more than once in the *Diary*, as in a memorable entry for May 20:

> Since I crossed the sea and came here, nearly a month has passed, but I haven't washed my face, or body, or clothing. My head is covered with dust, my clothing with filth, and my whole body has been given over to the bites of fleas. This I can still endure, but when it comes to being thirsty but unable to drink, or wishing to boil [rice] but being unable to find fuel, it is [as though] the realm of the hungry ghosts (*gakidō* 餓鬼道) has appeared before my eyes.[30]

The Buddhist cosmos has a rich and vivid catalogue of states of suffering, to which Sōen's writing has repeated recourse.

Having said that, Sōen's entries are replete with transcriptions of military orders, reports of troop movements and the outcome of battles, poetic verses composed in literary Chinese, and notes concerning correspondence received and sent. They give the general impression of an elite cleric who has thoroughly adapted himself to military concerns. The *Diary* itself states as much in an entry for April 25, which Sōen recorded off the coast of Korea, before his division had even reached Manchuria:

> Since I set off in the service of His Highness, two months have already passed. In my walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, I now closely approximate military discipline. Since boarding this ship, my daily activities are exactly the same as the officers and men, which is to say that I wear a uniform in the semi-secular fashion, and I partake of simple food with some meat.[31]

As he must have done within Japan, Sōen continued to associate primarily with men of the higher social ranks, a predilection that would have limited his personal contact with common soldiers.

Perhaps for this reason, the *Diary* devotes relatively little space specifically to the pastoral activities that Sōen undertook. The key activities that do appear are individual meetings and public Dharma talks. These took place on various scales, some with dozens of listeners, and some (those in Japan proper) for groups of over one thousand. Sōen recorded visits of consolation to injured soldiers and participation at memorial rites for dead soldiers, each undertaken at the invitation of high-ranking officers. For the great majority of the Dharma talks, Sōen records only the audience for the talk, the place of the talk, and sometimes the theme.

Those themes are presented in a form that is abbreviated, but often suggestive. On April 22, before an elite group of officers heading toward Manchuria, including Prince Sadanaru, Sōen spoke on the theme "no-self is none other than the Great Self" (*muga sunawachi taiga* 無我即ち大我).[32] On May 2, for a company of men in his division, he spoke on the theme of "liberation from *saṃsāra*" (*shōji gedatsu* 生死解脱).[33] Again for a group of officers including Sadanaru, on May 4, Sōen expounded on the theme "equality is none other than differentiation" (*byōdō soku shabetsu* 平等即差別).[34] On the battlefield, on June 19, Sōen spoke before a company of soldiers in another division on "the utility of religion" (*shūmon yūyō* 宗門有用).[35] Here, the term that I have glossed as "religion," *shūmon*, may also be understood as "Buddhism," which for Sōen would have been tantamount to "Rinzai Zen." Meanwhile, the first three themes represent Sōen's own variation on well-established topics in Zen or Mahāyana Buddhism.

In a few cases, it is possible to infer something more of the content of Sōen's sermons as a chaplain, and these consistently emphasize the necessity for developing inner spiritual strength. If there is any overriding theme to his chaplaincy, then here it lies. Sōen was evidently fond of recounting

a particular story about the Chinese founder of the Engakuji, Wuxue Zuyuan (Mugaku Sogen 無学祖元; posthumous title granted in Japan, "The National Preceptor of the Buddha's Radiance" or Bukkō Kokushi 仏光国師; 1226–1286). At least two references to it appear in the *Diary*. They are taken from Wuxue's *Recorded Sayings* (Ch. *yulu*, Jpn. *goroku* 語録): In 1276, as the Mongols pressed on with their invasion of the Song empire, Wuxue was practicing alone in his temple, staying behind after the other monks had already fled. When the Mongol soldiers arrived to massacre the temple inhabitants, Wuxue reportedly received them with absolute equanimity, and recited the following verse:

> In the whole universe, there is no longer a place where I can plant my solitary bamboo;
> I am glad, for man is empty, like everything else.
> I salute you, three-foot-long sword of the great Yuan Mongols!
> What you seek to behead in your lightning reflection is the wind of springtime.[36]

Reportedly, the Mongol soldiers were so impressed at this performance that they left Wuxue alone in peace.

The *Diary* makes allusion to this episode when a major general comes to Sōen for guidance aboard ship on May 5, and again when Sōen addresses a group of officers in camp on July 1.[37] Sōen was urging his listeners to attain a state of clear psychic resolution akin to Wuxue's, and to confront their own deaths with similar equanimity. A similar message is in evidence in a "spiritual talk" (*seishin kōwa* 精神講話) that Sōen delivered to a company of soldiers on June 16, on the theme "the enemy within, the enemy without" (*naiteki gaiteki* 内敵外敵). In this talk, Sōen told the common soldiers that external enemies—such as enemy troops, and disease—could be controlled, but that "the demons of the mind" (*shinma* 心魔) must be defeated so that peace of mind could be achieved.[38] Again, Sōen's focus is on the cultivation of unwavering mental strength.

On the battlefield, how might Sōen have instructed soldiers in the concrete cultivation of such mental fortitude? The *Diary* itself has little to say in this regard, but for a tentative answer to this question, we may look to a later publication by Sōen, *A Record of Traps and Snares* (*Senteiroku* 筌蹄録; hereafter, *Record*, 1909).[39] This compendium of various writings by Sōen includes a section entitled "Methods for Cultivation by Soldiers" (*Gunjin shūyō no hōhō* 軍人修養の方法).[40] In it, he outlines two methods of cultivation. The first, focus on duty, involves complete exertion in the elimination of all temptations and distractions, and the realization of one's individual unity with the cosmos, the state, the emperor, and all the people of Japan. The second method that Sōen recommends appears more classically Buddhist: "quiet sitting" (*seiza* 静坐) which is achieved by "the meditation of counting the breath" (*susokukan* 数息観, Skt. *āna-apāna*). Sōen points

out that the practice of this method also results in a sense of unity with the cosmos, and that, together with the first method, it can cultivate a state of "great fearlessness" (*dai mui* 大無畏).

In addition to his preaching to soldiers, Sōen's *Diary* also makes passing reference to other ritual modes of work with them. For instance, it mentions Sōen's distribution of "treasure amulets of the *Greater Prajñapāramitā Sūtra*" (*Dai Hannyakyō hōtoku* 大般若経宝牘) to detachments of soldiers on May 13, "for the purpose of praying for the health of the officers and men and the certain victory of the Imperial Army."[41] Other records of such distribution occur on May 17, and then again on May 24.[42] Sōen's distribution of amulets is of particular interest because this practice later drew harsh criticism in print from Satō Gan'ei (1875–1917), a True Pure Land Buddhist military chaplain attached to the Ninth Army Division, based in the True Pure Land stronghold of Kanazawa.[43] (Satō was sufficiently judicious not to refer to Sōen or Zen Buddhism by name, though he did locate the reliance on protective amulets squarely within Sōen's First Division. Military chaplaincy seems to have been as much a project of competition among different Buddhist groups as a unified project drawing them together.) Along with Sōen's conduct of memorial rites for dead soldiers, visits to the wounded and dying also constitute the remaining major category of chaplaincy work.

Prophylactic measures against enemy fire and consolatory visits aside, though, the central message of Sōen's chaplaincy was an exhortation to resolution and self-control: empty yourself of selfish thoughts, steel your resolve, and when the enemy come to cut you down, their blade will meet nothing but air. The aspiration for absolute transparency here is also an aspiration for absolute invulnerability. As Sōen's own record shows, the aspiration itself would prove as empty as the air.

## THE ROLES OF HORROR

While the *Diary* is largely lacking in effusive emotional expressions of any sort, it does include memorably vivid expressions of horror at war and its consequences. Of interest to us here is the way in which the Sōen as narrator and character fails to embody the prescriptions for invulnerability made by Sōen as preacher. In the description of a visit by Sōen to a field hospital on May 17, the *Diary* notes one Japanese officer who in good spirits despite being critically wounded: Both of his thighs had been pierced by shells, and his upper lip was completely ripped off. Then it continues:

> There were many others with critical wounds on the verge of death. Among these were [Russian] enemies who had suffered critical wounds, one captain and three others with light wounds, all housed here. [Like Japanese soldiers,] they too were loyal to their country; although they

> are our enemies, how could we not feel deep pity for them? I left and arrived at another ward, where I mourned two infantrymen who had died of wounds. Feelings of sadness assaulted me, and I was unable to recite the *sūtra* text. On this day I thought back over the tide of battle, and my feelings ranged more and more freely. Then I composed a poem:
>
> The giant cannonballs all pour down like rain;
> Life and death switch places in an instant's time.
> I gaze with sadness on the fields filled with ochre blood:
> Old Tiger Mountain in Liaodong reddened through and through.[44]

To be sure, expressions of pity for the enemy, when safely incapacitated or dead, may well express a sense of superiority to them. As Mohr has noted of this passage, though, here Sōen the narrator seems so affected by the carnage around him that he cannot fulfill his regular duties.[45] Even if only as a result of witnessing their similarly gruesome ends, the narrator here implicitly recognizes a kind of "equality of friend and foe" which Yoshida Kyūichi declared absent from the chaplaincy in the Russo-Japanese War.

Sōen's dream life, too, constitutes another realm of fear and revulsion in the *Diary*, although its records are highly cursory. An entry shortly after Sōen's arrival in Manchuria records: "I put down my pack and took a nap. In my dream, a Russian soldier came and chopped off my head. I awoke in a fright; fleas were swarming through the air around me and biting me everywhere."[46] Although not a part of this *Diary*, Sōen's later published journal from San Francisco includes a similar entry: "In my dreams at dawn, I was running through the fields of bloody battles in Manchuria. Jolted awake, I thought back to the traces of times past."[47] On the basis of his own reading of the *Diary*, Michel Mohr has suggested that Sōen left Manchuria with "physical and psychological wounds," the latter of which could be read as a kind of "post-traumatic stress disorder."[48] While neither diary makes any effort to interpret either of these short passages, both dreams position Sōen face-to-face with danger. In neither case does his narrative self confront that danger with anything like the equanimity practiced by Wuxue Zuyuan: Sōen's dream decapitation eventuates only in fright and a real, if slow, bloodletting by fleas.

The climax of horror in the *Diary* must lie in its vivid description of the aftermath of the crucially important battle of Southern Hill (Ch. Nanshan 南山), fought on May 25 with heavy casualties on both sides. Of some 36,400 Japanese participants in the battle, 4,387 were killed or wounded.[49] In order to carry out their assigned role in the attack, the members of the Army's Fourth Division had to advance uphill, exposed to Russian fire, while clambering over the bodies of their comrades.[50] Sōen's entry for May 27, two days after the battle, includes this passage:

> We stayed outside the southern gate of the town of Jinzhou 金州. . . . At seven in the morning, we departed from the southern gate and ascended immediately to the campground at Nanshan, where I visited the various brigades. Everywhere on and below the mountain, the corpses of enemy soldiers were scattered in disorder and piled up high. Some had heads smashed in, the blue blood (*hekiketsu* 碧血) flowing out copiously; others had bones broken and flesh crushed, their guts staining the ground; others still held their guns, their hair standing on end with rage.[51] Others had wholly swollen bodies, festering and emitting stench. They numbered four or five hundred, and the sight was indescribable. My eyes spun and my nose stung; confronted with this [scene], I forgot my hostility, and a feeling of pity welled up in my breast. The Buddha preached of four types of suffering (*shiku* 四苦) in the human realm, among which the most painful is the suffering of encountering that which we despise (*enzō egū no ku*冤憎会遇の苦). . . . I descended the mountain with my eyes covered, reciting the Four Universal Bodhisattva Vows (*shigu no ganmon* 四弘の願文) as I went. By the roadside, I mourned the war dead, and then I returned to the encampment.[52]

*Shiku*, *enzō egū no ku*, *shigu no ganmon*: reworked in this distinctly Buddhist idiom, the suffering of the battlefield is here transmuted into the universal suffering of all sentient beings; confronted with suffering on this cosmic scale, Sōen the narrator invokes the universal (*gu* 弘) vows of the bodhisattva, who commits to their equally universal salvation.[53] To be sure, Sōen's chronologically later *Taiyō* article, written after his return to Japan, also located the Russo-Japanese War within an overarching Buddhist cosmology. Within the *Diary* itself, which focuses on more quotidian matters, there is little such slippage into the cosmic register. These two invocations of cosmic scale lead to strikingly different conclusions: The *Taiyō* article concludes with a rousing direct address to its readers, imploring them to understand the unity of Zen with *Bushidō* 武士道, the mythical "Way of the Warrior," but this entry from the *Diary* ends in aporia, eloquently expressed in a Chinese poem recorded that night by a sleepless Sōen:

> The spring is quiet all around; a raw wind fills the ancient fortress.
> Among the wildflowers, blood stains the ground; among the disheveled grasses, the ghosts choke back their tears.
> I cry out with vigor to the souls of the dead, but there is no reply; all I can do is record the names of the fallen.
> In this boundless world, how difficult to communicate my feelings at this time![54]

To be sure, Sōen's Chinese versifying here is not free from stereotype, and the *Diary*'s transmutation of the Manchurian battlefield into a timeless Buddhist charnel ground may in one sense erase the Russian dead and the

Japanese attack that killed them. Nonetheless, this passage does stand in tension with the call to die (or to contemplate the death of others) with perfect equanimity. Sōen's unfinished wrestle with the key message undergirding the *Diary* spills over into the next day's entry. It begins with another Chinese poem, whose pivotal third verse urges, "Open the fist and wield the flash of lightning; brandish the sword and cut through the spring wind."[55] Explicitly reworking the language of Wuxue's poem, here Sōen seems no longer to identify with the implacable Wuxue, but rather to assume the role of the Mongol warriors, who wield the sword to strike the lightning blow against the spring wind. Perhaps this verse implicitly acknowledges that no amount of mental cultivation can confer invulnerability in battle, and even suggests that the only path left is that of aggression.

The battle at Southern Hill reappeared in Sōen's other public writing. In a short letter published under the heading "From the Battlefield" in *Taiyō* (*The Sun*) in August 1904, Sōen recognizes that his readers must already know well about the battles fought in Manchuria, but goes on to describe the battle of Southern Hill regardless, using language similar to that in the *Diary* description.[56] Published in the US, Sōen's 1906 English-language *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot* includes "At the Battle of Nan-Shan Hill" and "An Address Delivered at a Service Held in Memory of Those Who Died in the Russo-Japanese War."[57] Each of these sermons does indeed affirm Buddhist participation in war, but not before first returning to Southern Hill through explicit invocation of the "mutilated, disfigured, and decomposing corpses" of the "[h]undreds and hundreds of dead and wounded . . . scattered all over the hill, friends and foes indiscriminately."[58]

Whether Sōen's published accounts express some kind of personal psychic trauma or not, I suggest that they do reflect a serious grappling with the tensions inherent in a Buddhist military chaplaincy. Put simply, Sōen repeatedly produced and disseminated not ideologically watertight writing demonstrating the attainment of single-mindedness, but rather work whose narration struggles to stay in tune with its dominant theme. How, these texts seem to ask, could a Buddhist aspiring to save all sentient beings urge them to die with selfless fortitude? In the next breath, they reply: how could he not?

## CONCLUSION: TENSIONS WITHIN JAPANESE BUDDHIST MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

To recognize that Sōen's writing at times undermines its own stated themes, and to recognize in it a degree of inconsistency, multivalence, or multivocality, is not to endorse the Russo-Japanese War or the Japanese Buddhist military chaplaincy that supported it. Rather, it is to suggest another way of thinking Meiji-era Buddhist military chaplaincy as a viable field of research, and to suggest a way forward through focus on the tensions

attendant in this project of chaplaincy. In doing so, we may take figures like Sōen not only as objects of study, but also as our interlocutors. To do so would entail the recognition that their writing, consciously or not, may already embody some of the very tensions with which scholars and practitioners continue to wrestle today. It would also help the field to overcome the cycles of accusation and defense that have so strongly colored the study of Japanese Buddhism and modern warfare for the past several decades. The project of Buddhist chaplaincy may then not yet have ended, even if we learn from it something other than its intended lessons.

## NOTES

1. Hendrick L. Dickson, *U.S. Navy Commissions Military's First Buddhist Chaplain*, July 23, 2004. Available: http://www.navy.mil/search/print.asp?story_id=14398&VIRIN=16404&imagetype=1&page=1, January 27, 2012.
2. For a pioneering discussion of Buddhist military chaplaincy in the Russo-Japanese War, see Naoko Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War: Death, Memory, and the Russo-Japanese War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 94–97. This discussion focuses on chaplaincy by True Pure Land Buddhists. More broadly speaking, chaplaincy by monks elsewhere in the Buddhist world has also begun to attract attention in Anglophone scholarship. For a representative study of Theravāda Buddhist chaplains in a recent conflict, see Daniel W. Kent, "Onward Buddhist Soldiers: Preaching to the Sri Lankan Army," in *Buddhist Warfare*, ed. Michael Jerryson and Mark Juegensmeyer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
3. As Robert Sharf has presciently suggested, this apparent contradiction may owe more to "our" expectations than to any historical stances on the part of Zen institutions: "This does not mean that a medieval Zen abbot would have taken what *we* believe to be the moral high ground on the issue of Japanese imperialist aggression during the first half of the twentieth century. The real question, as I see it, is why we would expect him to." Robert Sharf, "Whose Zen? Zen Nationalism Revisited," *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, & the Question of Nationalism*, eds. James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 51.
4. Michel Mohr has ably documented the slippage among different versions of Sōen's published texts, and between Sōen's original Japanese writings and their "translations" in to English by D.T. Suzuki. See Michel Mohr, "The Use of Traps and Snares: Shaku Sōen Revisited," *Zen Masters*, eds. Heine Steven and Dale Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 192–195.
5. Reprinted in Judith Snodgrass, "Retrieving the Past? A Consideration of Texts," *The Eastern Buddhist* 31:2 (1998), 269.
6. Cited in Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War* (New York: Weatherhill, 1997), 27.
7. Yoshida Kyūichi, "Nis-Shin sensō to Bukkyō," *Nihon shūkyōshi ronshū*, ed. Kasahara Kazuo Hakase Kanreki Kinenkai, Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1976), 415.
8. Two articles noteworthy here are Kiba Akeshi, "Meiji-ki taigai sensō ni tai suru Bukkyō no yakuwari: Shinshū ryō Honganji-ha o rei to shite," *Ronshū Nihon Bukkyō-shi: Meiji jidai*, ed. Ikeda Eishun, Vol. 8 (Tokyo: 1987), and Annaka Naofumi, "Nis-Shin/Nichi-Ro sensō ni okeru Nichirenshū jūgunsō

ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu," *Nichiren kyōgaku kenkyūjo kiyō* 24 (1997). There is also a brief discussion of the military chaplaincy activities of the Honganji during the war against the Qing in Nawa Tsukinosuke, "Bukkyō to gunji engo jigyō: Nis-Shin sensō ni okeru Nishi Honganji kyōdan no jigyō o tansho to shite," *Shitennōji Kokusai Bukkyō Daigkau kiyō* 40 (2005), 23–24. Also see Mizumoto Hironori, "Nis-Shin sensō jūgunsō no nikki o yomu," *Ningen bunka* 28 (2011).

9. Concerning the oversupply of Nichiren-related clerical volunteers for chaplaincy during the Russo-Japanese War, see Annaka, "Nis-Shin/Nichi-Ro sensō ni okeru Nichirenshū jūgunsō ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu," 11.
10. Needless to say, the very highest level of leadership in various denominations was generally personally involved, but so were other prominent figures now best known for other reasons. When the Honganji denomination dispatched a chaplain to the battlefield in Korea in 1894, he carried a letter of encouragement to the Japanese on the peninsula from no less prominent a figure than Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911), today best remembered for his invocation of "freedom of religion" in defense of Buddhism, and for his decisive contribution to the True Pure Land denominations' withdrawal from the early Meiji-era Academy of Doctrine (Daikyōin 大教院). See Kiba, "Meiji-ki taigai sensō ni tai suru Bukkyō no yakuwari: Shinshū ryō Honganji-ha o rei to shite," 253. Nawa Tsukinosuke has noted that Shimaji also published his own guide to chaplaincy. See Nawa, "Bukkyō to gunji engo jigyō: Nis-Shin sensō ni okeru Nishi Honganji kyōdan no jigyō o tansho to shite," 24. Meanwhile, two chaplains dispatched by the Nichiren denomination to both wars were Wakita Gyōjun脇田尭惇 (1860–1928) and Morimoto Bunjō守本文静 (1854–1909), both disciples of the late Edo- and early-Meiji era Nichiren cleric Arai Nissatsu 新居日薩 (1830–1888). These individuals had important careers in the modern remaking of the Nichiren denomination: In 1910–1911, Wakita served as the fourth president of the Nichiren Denominational University (Nichirenshū Daigaku 日蓮宗大学), predecessor to today's Risshō University (Risshō Daigaku 立正大学). See Annaka, "Nis-Shin/Nichi-Ro sensō ni okeru Nichirenshū jūgunsō ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu," 4. After his return from the war against the Qing, Morimoto went on to serve as head for one of the Nichiren *danrin* 壇林 (traditional denominational academies) in Kyoto. See Kawamura Kawamura Kōshō and Nichiren Monka Bukke Jinmei Jiten Henshū Iinkai, *Meiji Taishō Shōwa Nichiren monka Bukke jinmei jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1978), 489.
11. Kiba, "Meiji-ki taigai sensō ni tai suru Bukkyō no yakuwari: Shinshū ryō Honganji-ha o rei to shite," 259–261.
12. Kiba, "Meiji-ki taigai sensō ni tai suru Bukkyō no yakuwari: Shinshū ryō Honganji-ha o rei to shite," 262.
13. See Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War*. Also see the companion volume: Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen War Stories* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).
14. For instance, see Satō Kemmyō Taira, "D.T. Suzuki and the Question of War," *The Eastern Buddhist* 39:1 (2008).
15. See Christopher Ives, *Imperial-Way Zen: Ichikawa Hakugen's Critique and Lingering Questions for Buddhist Ethics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).
16. See Victoria, *Zen at War*, 25–29, 31–37.
17. In English, these include Shokin Furuta, "Shaku Soen: The Footsteps of a Modern Japanese Zen Master," *Philosophical Studies of Japan* 8 (1967); James Edward Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), particularly chapter four; Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the*

*West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Richard M. Jaffe, "Seeing Śākyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 30:1 (2004); and Mohr, "The Use of Traps and Snares: Shaku Sōen Revisited." In Japanese, these include Haga Kōshirō, "Shaku Sōen: Bukkyō no kindaika," *Asahi jānaru*, October 7, 1962; Furuta Shōkin, "Kindai nihon no Zensha no ayumi: Shaku Sōen no shōgai," *Jiyū*, October 1968; Tsunemitsu Kōnen, *Meiji no Bukkyōsha*, Vol. 1, 2 Vols. (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1968), 216–217; and Inoue Zenjō, *Shaku Sōen den* (Kyōto: Zen Bunka Kenkyūjo, 2000).

18. On Sōen's checkered career at this secular university, see the painstaking archival work in Mohr, "The Use of Traps and Snares: Shaku Sōen Revisited," 188–191.
19. See Soyen Shaku, *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot: Addresses on Religious Subjects*, trans. Suzuki Daisetz Teitaro (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1906). Find excerpts from this book reproduced and usefully recontextualized in Donald S. Lopez, ed., *A Modern Buddhist Bible: Essential Readings from East and West* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 35–48.
20. Lawrence P. Rockwood, "Apologies of a Buddhist Soldier," *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* 5:3 (1996): 71–76.
21. From the passage of the Conscription Ordinance (Chōheirei 徴兵令) in 1873 until the 1880s, Buddhist clerics above a certain government-issued rank had been eligible for such deferrals. Citing both international precedent and monastic law, a group of Buddhist clerics did petition the Imperial Diet shortly after its inauguration in 1890 for the exemption of all Buddhist clergy from draft requirements, but this effort failed. For the text of the petition, see Kusunoki Keijun's privately published *Sōryo heieki menjo seigan riyūsho* (Tokyo: Kusunoki Keijun, 1891).
22. Akamatsu Tesshin, "Inoue Shūten no shisō: Sono shōgai to heiwaron oyobi Zen shisō," *Ryūkoku Daigaku ronshū* 434–435 (1989), 520. Here Akamatsu records that Inoue Shūten was affiliated with the "First" Army Division, but this is an error for "Eleventh." Sōen records encountering Inoue in the *Diary* entry for June 11, 1904. See Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," *Kannongyō kōwa, hoka nihen*, Vol. 7, *Shaku Sōen zenshū* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1929), 263–264. In this entry, not only does Shaku Sōen name the Eleventh Division, but he also he refers correctly to the Eleventh Division's head as Tsuchiya Mitsuharu 土屋光春 (1848–1920). For an overview of the composition of the Third Army, which included both Sōen's First Division and Inoue's Eleventh Division, see Harada Katsumasa, *Nichi-Ro Sensō no jiten: Kindai Nihon no bunsuirei* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1986), 73. For scholarship in English concerning Inoue Shūten, see Moriya Tomoe, "Social Ethics of "New Buddhists" at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: A Comparative Study of Suzuki Daisetsu and Inoue Shūten," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 32:2 (2005).
23. Originally presented in the male-gendered Japanese style of literary Chinese (*kanbun* 漢文), the *Diary* was republished in 1929, after Sōen's death, among the volumes of his complete works (*zenshū* 全集). There it was rewritten in the *kundoku* 訓読 style of reading literary Chinese via classical Japanese grammar. This is the edition to which I refer in the present study. As Mohr points out, the so-called "complete works" are actually far from complete. See his, "The Use of Traps and Snares: Shaku Sōen Revisited," 186. Mohr has translated the title of Sōen's published record as *Journal on Defeating Demons*; I have chosen a slightly different translation for stylistic reasons. Unlike some other published writings by Sōen—and perhaps, unsurprisingly—the *Diary* was not reprinted between 1945 and 2011.

24. See Haga, "Shaku Sōen: Bukkyō no kindaika," 43; Tsunemitsu, *Meiji no Bukkyōsha*, 216–217; and Furuta, "Kindai nihon no Zensha no ayumi: Shaku Sōen no shōgai," 189–190. The final essay also exists in an adapted English version, as Furuta, "Shaku Soen: The Footsteps of a Modern Japanese Zen Master."
25. Inoue, *Shaku Sōen den*, 119–128.
26. See Mohr, "The Use of Traps and Snares: Shaku Sōen Revisited," 199–201.
27. Shaku Sōen, "Daisenjō tō no nyozekan," *Taiyō* (September 1904), 56.
28. Shaku Sōen, "Daisenjō tō no nyozekan," 58.
29. This rhetoric anticipates ideas espoused some decades later by Korean Buddhist leaders who cooperated with the Japanese imperial war effort, such as Kwŏn Sangno權相老 (1879–1965), detailed elsewhere in this volume by Vladimir Tikhonov.
30. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 233–234.
31. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 213. "Walking, standing, sitting, and lying down" (*gyōjū zaga* 行住坐臥) represent the "four dignified postures" (Sino-Japanese *shiigi*四威儀; Skt. *caturvidhā īryāpathāḥ*) in Buddhist parlance. Here they might be interpreted as demonstrating the complete range of human activity. See the entry in *Nichi-Ei Bukkyō jiten (*Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary), revised and expanded ed. (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1991), 305.
32. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 212.
33. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 219.
34. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 220.
35. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 270. *Shūmon* 宗門 was one of various terms initially used in Japan to translate the modern Euroamerican concept of "religion," but by 1904, it had already been superseded by the now-standard translation *shūkyō* 宗教.
36. The original Chinese text is as follows: 乾坤無地卓孤笻、喜得人空法亦空、珍重大元三尺剣、電光影裡斬春風. See the "Record of Conduct by the Chan Master Wuxue" (*Wuxue chanshi xingzhang* 無学禅師行状) in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* No. 2549, volume 80, page 238. The English translation here is taken from Faure Bernard and Janet Lloyd, *Double Exposure: Cutting Across Buddhist and Western Discourses* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 167.
37. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 221, 281.
38. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 266.
39. On the *Record of Traps and Snares*, see Mohr, "The Use of Traps and Snares: Shaku Sōen Revisited." Also see the short explanatory discussion in Yoshida Kyūichi, ed., *Meiji shūkyō bungakushū (1)* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1969), 407–408.
40. Shaku Sōen, *Seitenroku* (Tokyo: Kōdōkan, 1909), 144–149.
41. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 226.
42. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 230, 236.
43. Satō's retrospective published account of his time as a chaplain, the "Record of A Military Chaplain to the Ninth Division" (*Dai-kyū shidan jūgunsō kenbunki*), was included in his *Commemorative Album of the Triumphal Return of the Ninth Division* (*Dai-kyū shidan gaisen kinenchō*), published in December 1905. See the relevant passage from the reprint of this "Record" in *Heishi*, ed. Ōhama Tetsuya, *Kindai minshū no kiroku* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 1978), 359.
44. Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 230. The original Chinese text of the poem is as follows: 挙大砲丸如雨潜、死生易地刹那間、愁看満野玄黄血、赤尽遼東老虎山.
45. Mohr, "The Use of Traps and Snares: Shaku Sōen Revisited," 200.
46. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 228.

47. Shaku Sōen, *Ōbei unsui ki* (Tokyo: Kinkōdō, 1907), 13.
48. Mohr, "The Use of Traps and Snares: Shaku Sōen Revisited," 200.
49. Harada, *Nichi-Ro Sensō no jiten: Kindai Nihon no bunsuirei*, 70.
50. Harada, *Nichi-Ro Sensō no jiten: Kindai Nihon no bunsuirei*, 69.
51. The term *hekiketsu* (Ch. *bixue*), originating in the *Zhuangzi*, is a laudatory expression for suggesting the spilling of blood as an expression of loyalty. If Sōen were using this term in reference to the Russian soldiers, then that use would signal a degree of praise for them.
52. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 242.
53. *Enzō egū no ku* seems to be a variant of the more common way of expressing the same concept, *onzōe-ku* 怨憎會苦 (Skt. *apriya-saṃprayoga-duḥkha*), "the suffering that comes from being together with those whom one hates." *Nichi-Ei Bukkyō jiten (Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary)*, 254.
54. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 243. The original Chinese text of this poem is as follows: 一望春凄寂、腥風満古城、野花血塗地、荒草鬼呑声、毅魄呼無答、伏屍纔記名、茫茫寰宇裡、難愬此時情.
55. Shaku Sōen, "Gōma nisshi," 243. The original Chinese text of this verse is as follows: 開挙拏紫電、揮剣斬春風.
56. Shaku Sōen, "Senchi yori," *Taiyō*. August 1904, 143.
57. These appear in Soyen Shaku, *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot: Addresses on Religious Subjects*, 198–214.
58. Soyen Shaku, *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot: Addresses on Religious Subjects*, 202, 206.

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# Part III

# Buddhist Justifications for Peace and Militarism

# 8 The Question of Violence in Thai Buddhism

*Suwanna Satha-Anand*

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Religion as a civilizing force for peace and as justification for violence has been a complex phenomenon in world history. It is beyond the scope of any paper to address such problems of cumulative complexities. In this chapter, I would give a broad and critical overview of the question of violence in Buddhism, with special emphasis on the question of violence in Thai Buddhism.

## THREE DECISIVE MOMENTS IN BUDDHIST HISTORY

The term "Buddhism" is used here with full awareness of its complex philosophical, historical, and cultural diversity. Basically, Buddhism in this chapter indicates the philosophical position and the historical expressions of the Buddhist traditions. There are at least three major moments in Buddhist history which carry direct bearings on the question of violence.

First moment, "Buddhism" during the time of the Buddha. This moment of Buddhism could be characterized as a moment of non-violence. Technically speaking, there was no "Buddhism" in the institutional sense during the time of the Buddha. There was perhaps a reformist movement against the theological/political influence of Hinduism. Scholars agree that the Buddha rejected the Hindu caste system which utilized the creation myth of the Lord Brahma to explain and justify the caste system, with different castes emerging from different parts of the Lord Brahma. The Brahmins are those born from the mouth, and the outcastes are those born from the feet of the Lord Brahma, for example. The Buddha explicitly criticized and "played with" this creation myth and offered an alternative narrative regarding the evolution of human society, the state, and the different groups of people in society.[2] In the *Agganna Sutta*, the Buddha was recorded as saying that all the Brahmins he saw were born of the wombs of their Brahmin mothers. The implication was that none of the Brahmins was born from the mythical "mouth of Lord Brahma." This Buddha who was highly critical of the Hindu system, had been a prince who rejected the possibility of becoming

king. In this sense, Prince Siddhatta, at the age of twenty-nine, was rejecting temporal power which necessarily involves the legal and regular use of violence through physical punishment and at times through wars. This particular aversion to the use of violence in Buddhism was highlighted in a *jataka* tale on a previous life of the Buddha when he was Prince Temija. In that particular *jataka* tale, young prince Temija, decided to feign deaf and dumb, in order to avoid becoming king in the future. The crucial decision was made when Temija's father, the king, putting young Temija on his lap while issuing an order to execute a convict. The thought of having to go to hell for killing was so scary for the young prince, Temija made up his mind then and there that he must opt for stupidity, rather than kingship.[2] One must also be reminded that first precept of Buddhism is non-killing.

Second moment, Buddhism under King Ashoka. This moment of Buddhism could be characterized as a moment of post-violence. Many scholars agree that King Ashoka, the first great Buddhist king, embraced Buddhism as state religion after waging bloody wars and conquering competing states, creating a vast Buddhist empire. Archeological evidence based on inscriptions on Asokan pillars suggests that King Asoka's Buddhist empire was a kingdom of peace and religious tolerance.[3] Sermons on great kings by Buddhist monks in Thailand, school textbooks outlining the history of Buddhism regularly mention King Asoka as the model for great Buddhist king until today.

Third moment, State Buddhism in Thai history. This moment of Buddhism could be characterized as basically non-violent, though at times of political crisis could also show a violent face. In many school textbooks on the history of Siam or the history of Thai Buddhism, very often there is a mention of the role of a leading monk during the time of war in the Ayuddhya Period. History has it that during a dangerous battle with the Burmese, the generals in the Siamese troops were lost in the confusion in the middle of a battle and could not catch up with King Nareusuan (r. 1555–1605) whose elephant and a handful of foot-solders were caught among much larger troops of the Burmese prince. With wit, courage, and fighting skill, King Nareusuan, against all odds, won the decisive battle over the Burmese and declared independence for Ayuddhya. After the return, King Nareusuan was consulting with the chief monk on how to level punishment on those generals who left him in such great danger. The chief monk's reply changed the direction of thoughts of the great king. He reasoned with the king that the generals' failure was but an occasion for the greater glory of the king. Without support from his generals, the king had to utilize his skills to the utmost and the victory under such precarious condition testified to the greatness of the king. The king having heard this, pardoned his generals and they avoided capital punishment.

Another less well-known incident was when King Rama VI (r. 1910–1925) decided to join Britain and the Allies during World War I in 1915. A high-ranking monk by the name of Phra Thep Moli Sirichantoe published a

book, attacking military knowledge in a cremation volume. One thousand copies were distributed. The key point of that book was: "Good knowledge leads to progress while bad knowledge leads to corruption."[4] The monk pointed out that an example of evil knowledge is military studies. Knowledge about shooting is included because it lacks compassion to other human beings. Knowledge on how to make guns, swords, and all kinds of weapons such as aircrafts, submarines, explosives, and torpedoes is evil knowledge which will certainly lead to ruin and corruption.[5] The monk then cited an example of World War I. "Each side did not want to solve the cause of the conflict. Instead, they intend on exercising their power which finally leads to violent war between each other. War then spreads all over the world. People die because of weapons of destruction or starvation or other diseases as a result of dirt and pollution. Not only soldiers die, but old people, women and children who flee for safety also die because of hunger. The number of people died in this war is impossible to count."[6] The content of this book presented a challenge to the King's policy of joining the Allies. Later on, the Supreme Patriarch who was uncle to Rama VI, delivered a special allocution on "The Buddhist Attitude Towards National Defense and Administration" defending the king's decision to join the War from the basis of Buddhist teachings. This sermon was translated into English by the King. A more detailed analysis of this sermon will follow.

Historically speaking, Thai society has shown religious tolerance toward peoples of different ideologies and faiths. However, in 1976, Kittivuddho, a leading Buddhist monk came out and said that killing Communists is not a sin.[7] That statement was made during the regional struggle with Communism in Thailand and in many countries in Southeast Asia. The reasons given by this monk to justify killing Communists will be discussed in more detail. Moreover, under different circumstances and for different reasons, in the 1990s, there emerged a conservative Buddhist movement under the banner "Council for the Protection of Buddhism." This group has been advocating distrust and fear against the religious others, mostly the Christians and the Muslims. The history of the crusade, the various wars waged by the Muslims, are cited as evidence that Christianity and Islam are not religion of peace and tolerance. Buddhism, on the other hand, has been consistently a religion of peace and tolerance and could be the only spiritual path for Thai society if this society were to live up to her reputation of a society of religious freedom and tolerance. Publications by a leading monk scholar outlining the position of this conservative Buddhist group will be analyzed.

## THREE MILITANT MOMENTS IN THAI BUDDHISM

Many scholars of Thai Buddhism agree that the Sangha and the Thai state have enjoyed a symbiotic relationship, one partner reflecting the other in their identity. This symbiotic relationship has been most widely described

as one of patron-client relationship, with the state being the patron, the Sangha the client.[8] According to a leading political scientist, throughout Thai history, Buddhism has not been separated from the state. The Sangha seeks to secure the adherence of political rulers, such as the king or the government, to Buddhist values. For this would guarantee their virtual monopoly as spiritual leaders and religious professionals of the state. On the other hand, political leaders need to secure the cooperation of the Sangha. The state needs moral legitimacy while the people need moral control.[9] Another political scientist who did pioneering research in the relationship between Buddhism and the Thai state, Somboon Suksamran, concludes, "It is very likely that the interests of the political rulers and the Sangha coincided- that a ideology which needed supportive political power met a political ruler looking for a legitimating ideology. What developed was a peculiar type of state based on the reciprocal relationships between the political rulers and Sangha."[10] This close and continuing relationship between Buddhism and the Thai state has informed and shaped the contours of Buddhist teachings for the Thai populace for more than seven centuries. During times of peace and without imminent political crisis, Thai Buddhism has been a benign partner of the Thai state. However, in times of crises, the Buddhist establishment has come out and provided versions of justification for the specific policies of the state.[11]

In twentieth-century history of Thailand, there have been at least three major moments of special importance for the protection of the Monarchy, the Nation, and the Religion. At these unusual moments, leading Buddhist monks would come out and offer articulations and explanations for the protection of the three pillars of the country. The following will be an analysis of these three unusual moments when Thai Buddhism has come out to offer justifications for war, for killing, and for labeling violence on religious others.

## SIAM JOINING WORLD WAR I

Rama VI became King of Siam in 1910. When the war broke out in 1914, Siam was not in any military danger. Nevertheless, the King, who underwent military training at Sandhurst and read history at Oxford, showed strong support for England and France in his extensive journalistic writings and with monetary gifts to his old regiment, the Durham Light Infantry. In July 1917, Siam entered the war and a small volunteer expeditionary force of about 1200 was sent to Europe. The troops arrived too late to take part in actual fighting, but they were able to join the victory parades in Paris and London, and then Bangkok.[12] As a result of the Siamese gesture of support, King Rama VI was granted the rank of Honorary General in the English Army.[13] As mentioned earlier, this decision by the King to lend support to the Allies met with some resistance by Phra Thep Moli who published a

book criticizing military knowledge. The book also mentioned the incident of World War I and by implication was a critical challenge to the King's policy. The sermon by the Supreme Patriarch, which will be analyzed in this chapter, can be seen as a rebuttal move against Phra Thep Moli and to give blessings to the King's decision. Siam at that time was under absolute monarchy and thus the decision of the King was the policy of the state. In the sermon, the Supreme Patriarch utilized several canonical sources to justify the King's decision. In summary, we could categorize the arguments put forth by the Supreme Patriarch into 4 types: first, hierarchy of sacrifice; second, leadership of the King; third, justice in conflict; fourth, preparation for war in time of peace.

At the beginning of the sermon, the Supreme Patriarch lays out the supreme value of Righteousness. He says,

> "for in doing any deed their principal aim would be righteousness, holding righteousness to be the greatest thing of all, and would even sacrifice Wealth, Body and Life for the sake of righteousness. Those who willingly sacrifice their lives for the sake of their Religion and their country are people who hold such opinions. . . . the ancient Sages have therefore arranged the teaching into the following verses:
>
> "Man should sacrifice wealth in order to preserve his limbs,
> which are more precious;
> "To preserve life, he should sacrifice all his limbs;
> "When righteousness is in question, Wealth, Limbs and even Life,
> all must be sacrificed should the occasion so demand it.[14]

After laying out this hierarchy of values and consequently implying a hierarchy of sacrifice, the Supreme Patriarch gives examples of the occasions which would demand this line of thinking. He says, "In time of adversity, when life could only be preserved at the expense of righteousness, as for example in the matter of Religious Faith when one finds one's self compelled to embrace another religion in which one has no belief, or in war when taken prisoner by the enemy who would compel one to commit an act which would be harmful to one's nation and country, then even life must be sacrificed, to say nothing of wealth or limb, which one would sacrifice as a matter of course."[15] This line of reasoning implies that righteousness necessarily includes putting highest values on religion and country. Once these two are under threat, being righteous would involve implementing a "proper" order of sacrifice. In the quoted verses, the life of the individual needs to be protected at the cost of wealth or limbs of the same person. These sayings are being utilized to justify losing life in order to protect something else more valuable, namely religion and country. In this sense, a question arises whether righteousness implies the necessity of submitting to this order of values itself? If the answer is in the positive, it would mean

that being righteous implies being patriotic. Once the submission to this hierarchy of values is achieved, the order of sacrifice is also established.

The second argument of leadership of a king indicates that the King as leader of men needs to do what might be painful for others. The Patriarch begins with another ancient saying:

> "When a herd of cattle is fording a stream, if the leading ox leads straight, all the oxen will follow straight."[16]

The sermon offers further elaboration. "It is the same among men. If he whom people call the highest is Righteous, even so would the rest of the people follow his lead in the way of Righteousness . . . That which is really good for the people, even though it may be unpleasing to them, would be done unto them by the Great, very much as parents who, though aware of the fact that their infant dislikes the taste of medicine, must yet compel the infant to take it in order to cure some illness . . ."[17] Both the ancient saying and the analogy put forth by the Supreme Patriarch use examples of animal and infant as comparative basis of the relationship between the King and his people. The two examples indicate a different level of life form and a state of maturity which is less than a fully grown person. In both examples, the leading ox and the father "know better" than the other oxen and the infant. It is interesting to note that in the first saying, there is a situation of possible danger. In following the leading ox, the other oxen might have a better chance of safety. At least, if there is danger, the leading ox will have to encounter the danger first before the following herd. In the latter case, the situation is that of an illness of the child. It could be dangerous for the child if the child is not forced to take the medicine. In both situations, the leader knows better. It is only best for the followers to follow, than to pose any challenge or offer alternatives.

The third argument of justice in a conflict situation begins with a conflict among those living in close proximity. The argument runs thus:

> "Communities which have business in common and live in close proximity to one another will inevitably have disputes, either on account of their business or their properties. It is the duty of those who govern to investigate and point out the right and wrong in order to end such disputes. And among communities, there must inevitably be some necessitous persons who commit the theft of other's wealth, and others there must be who are evil-minded and do harm unto others; and so on. It is the duty of those who govern to investigate and punish evil doers, in order to secure the happiness of the people. If the investigation and punishment is not in accordance with justice, then unhappiness is caused to the people."[18]

It is interesting to note that, in contrast to the story of Temija who, as a child, was shocked to see the "duty of those who govern" which necessarily

involves leveling punishment for wrong-doers, in this sermon, this particular duty is highlighted as a virtue. It is a virtue fit for a king and it is necessary for justice and happiness of the people. In this sense, punishment is necessary for justice and happiness for the many. In context of the Phra Thep Moli incident, it might be interpreted as justifying the kind of punishment necessary for the wrong-doing. However, a broader implication is inherently possible, namely, that physical punishment which often involves violence is justified as it is necessary for justice and happiness of the many.[19]

The fourth argument of necessity to prepare for war in time of peace comprises of three components. First, when conflicts are not solved through civilized means, the use of force is justified. The Supreme Patriarch cites the present Great War in Europe as a case in point. He argues, "Such being the case, each nation finds it necessary to organize some of its own citizens into a class, whose duty it is to fight against its enemies. In ancient times, this class was known as 'Kshatriya,' with the King as the Chief thereof . . . The defense against external foes is one of the policies of governance, and is one that cannot be neglected. War generally occurs suddenly, . . . Therefore, war must be prepared for, even in time of peace."[20] Although at that time, there was no clear possibility for war in Siam, Siam must prepare for war. The second component of this argument is very interesting. It explicitly states that the prosperity of Siam was a result of her citizens being warriors. The sermon states, "This realm of Siam has enjoyed great prosperity because all her citizens used to be warriors. . . . Owing to the fact that the citizens having been warriors, the Kingdom enjoyed a long period of peace, so that civilians become totally inexperienced in warfare, and even the military were none too proficient."[21] This is a reductionist argument, indicating one single condition as the "cause" of a condition of prosperity of the nation. This argument sidesteps the roles of culture, economy, diplomacy, among others, as significant factors contributing to the prosperity of the nation. This argument also "reminds" all citizens of their past as warriors. That past has degenerated because of its own success. That is why when the kingdom enjoys long period of peace, the civilians have become "totally inexperienced in warfare and even the military were none too proficient." The third component of this argument is derived from the second component. If it were true that all citizens were warriors and that was the reason why the kingdom has enjoyed long period of peace, then it is only natural for the king, not only to reinvigorate the military but also to re-militarize the civilians. The Supreme Patriarch states, "You have founded the Corps of 'Wild Tigers' in order to teach civilians the practice of war, and You have initiated amongst schoolboys the Boy Scout Movement to foster in boys the warrior spirit. All these things Your Majesty has done out of Your desire to turn Your people into warriors of old."[22]

It is interesting to note that these four arguments, namely, establishing a hierarchy of values and thus a hierarchy of sacrifice, leadership of the king, justice in conflict, and preparation for war in time of peace, being put forth

to justify Siam's joining World War I, were delivered on the occasion of the King's birthday and as virtues of the King. They seem to imply that as state policies are issued from personal virtues of the King expressed in Buddhist discourse, those policies are justified.

## "KILLING COMMUNISTS IS NOT A SIN"

In 1976, sixty years after the sermon by the Supreme Patriarch, a leading and outspoken monk, Kittivuddho, gave an interview to *Caturat*, a popular news magazine at the time, explicitly stating that "Killing Communists is not de-meritorious."[23] This interview was given in the context of a political crisis brought about by the student-led uprising of 1973, the creation of Parliamentary system of government in Thailand and the Communist victories in neighboring Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.[24] The fear and anxiety of Communism spreading to all countries in Southeast Asia was the context and pretext of the rise of militant Buddhism at that time. Kittivuddho was a leading spoke-person for this form of Buddhism.[25] As there have been a large number of publications on the political crisis in Thailand in the late 1970s, this chapter will focus mainly on the types of reasons outlined by Kittivuddo in his justification of killing, even as a monk.

Based on an analysis of the original publication in Thai and a useful study by Charles F. Keyes, we can delineate five arguments put forth by Kittivuddho.

First, "killing" Communists is not really killing; second, sacrifice the lesser good for the greater good; third, the intention is not to kill but to protect the country; fourth, the Buddha allowed killing; and fifth, a projection of dire consequences in the future.

The first argument is very common and well-rehearsed. In the interview, Kittivuddho was asked whether the killing of leftists and Communists is a demerit (*pappa*). He replied, "I think that it should be done. Although Thais are Buddhists, they should do it. But this is not to be seen as killing human beings because whoever destroys nation, religion and King, is not a full person. We must have intention. Our intention is not to kill human being, but to kill monsters/devils. This is the duty of all Thais."[26] It is interesting to note that the insertion of "Although" in the second sentence suggests that Kittivuddho realized that killing is prohibited in Buddhism. But he seemed to suggest that the other duty of protecting the three pillars of Thai nation, namely, nation, religion, and King, is above and beyond the first Buddhist precept of non-killing. The act of killing is also toned down by redefining those who are killed as not "fully" a person or human being. The portraying of enemies as beasts or lesser humans is a common tactic, justifying killing.

The logic of the second argument has earlier appeared in the Supreme Patriarch's sermon to King Rama VI, but the content is different.

Kittivuddho argues that as the Buddha taught that one must sacrifice the lesser good for the greater good, so too must "our heroes sacrifice their lives in order to preserve the nation, religion, and monarchy for all of us."[27] He continues:

> "Our heroes must kill people; however, those people are enemies of the country. This (act of killing) is certainly de-meritorious, but the merit is greater.
>
> I believe that all those (heroes) make greater merit. Today, when I make merit, the first thing I think about are our heroes who do their duty to protect the country, the religion, and the institution of monarchy. I always dedicate a portion of the merit I make to all these."[28]

In this saying, Kittivuddho admits that killing is de-meritorious, but it still needs to be done as it will create greater merit. In this scale of values, it is clear that nationalism and patriotism are put at the highest level, thus justifying the violation of the first Buddhist precept. It is important to note that many Thai monks are great advocates of nationalism, so much so that, their identity as Buddhist (monk) and their identity as a Thai cannot be distinguished. In this sense, it indicates that the Thai-ization of Buddhism is so complete and normalized that many Thai monks and Kittivuddho in this case, explicitly prioritize patriotism when facing a contradiction or a tension of killing and being Buddhist. Once nationalism is put at the highest point on a scale of values, the violation of the first Buddhist precept is re-defined as an act of "sacrifice."

The third argument that the Buddha allowed killing needs careful analysis of the reasoning process.

In another place of his speech, Kittivuddho asks, "Did the Lord Buddha teach us to kill or not? He did. He taught us to kill. Venerable sirs, you are likely to be suspicious about this teaching. I will tell you the *sutta* and you can investigate: (It is) *Kesi-sutta* in the *Kesiya-vagga*, the *Suttanipitaka, Anguttara-nikaya, Catukaka-nipata*. If you open (this text) venerable sirs, you will find in the *sutta* that the Lord Buddha ordered killing."[29] Having made this claim, Kittivuddho then tells the story contained in this *sutta*. There was a famous horse trainer who visited the Buddha. The Buddha asked what methods he used to train horses such that he had obtained the reputation which he had. The trainer replies that for some horses he uses a gentle technique, for others a severe technique, and for others a combination of these. What if none of these methods work, the Buddha asks. Then I kill the horse, the trainer replied. Why? Asked the Buddha. "In order not to destroy the reputation of the teacher." The Buddha makes an analogy between himself and the trainer regarding his teaching of the Dhamma. However, what the Buddha means, he explains, is that one kills by ceasing to teach the person who cannot be taught. Kittivuddho explains:

> "The Buddha kills and discards, but the word 'kill' according to the principles of the Buddha is killing according to the Dhamma and Vinaya of Buddhism. To kill and discard by not teaching is the method of killing. I don't mean that the Lord Buddha ordered the killing of persons. But (he ordered) the killing of the impurities of people."[30]

This is a dangerous game of meaning manipulation. It is obvious both from the story itself as well as from the elaboration of Kittivuddho that the Buddha was using the conversation with the horse trainer as an analogy of how he taught. The killing of un-trainable horses is compared to the discarding of teaching or the killing of impurities of people, not the people themselves. And yet, Kittivuddho does not put in the "object" of killing in his insistence that the Buddha "ordered killing." In the context of the speech and in the political climate of the time, it seems most likely that the audience the would put the "frame of meaning" of this teaching of Kittivuddho on to the Communists, as the "object of killing" in this speech. He would have made his point while at the same time kept himself safe by later saying that the object of killing here is the impurities of people, not the people themselves.

The fourth argument about the extended chains of intention is both common and theoretically difficult. Kittivuddho turns to the question of intention (cetana) in defining one's action. He argues that according to Buddhist teaching, for a death to be considered to have been caused by an act of killing, the Vinaya requires that five conditions be met. They are: the animal must have life, one must know that the animal has life, one must intend to kill, one must act only in order to kill, the animal must die by that act.[31] According to Keyes, although he does not make the connection explicit at this point, he does say that soldiers are justified in killing if they do not intend to kill people, but act on the intention to protect the country.[32] In a way this is a rather familiar argument used by people to justify their good ends through necessary bad actions. If a father has to kill a serial killer to protect his young daughter, the motivation of the father could be justified, in the sense that it could be accepted by a given society whose basic values include that of protecting one's family. It would not be difficult to imagine that the legal punishment for that father could be reduced as he was acting to protect the life of his daughter. Moreover, the intention of the actor or the chain of intention of the actor is highly relevant to the consideration of the acceptability or unacceptability of an act. In this case under consideration, the intention to kill might be weak or secondary, while the main or the primary intention is to protect one's country. In this sense the condemnation of the act of killing would be more readily acceptable.[33] Kittivuddho is highlighting the good intention to protect one's country as the only or main reason for killing. In this way, he is downplaying or negating the intention to kill. If this were the case, this act of killing would not fulfill all five conditions outlined previously and therefore, the act of killing Communists would not be considered an act of killing. The fifth argument is the

projection of dire consequences if Communism would be victorious. One could see that this argument is designed to create fear for the audience. In the controversial interview Kittivuddho gave the following dire scenario. When asked what would be his opinion if both the leftists and the rightists use violent means like throwing bombs at each other. Kittivuddho replied:

> "That is a fighting technique. It would be a lesson for all Thais to see that our fascination with any ideology bring about bad results, in every life cycle. We can use Russia as a case in point. When Communism took over Russia, over 22 millions people were killed. In China, 62.5 millions Chinese were killed. In Vietnam, there were no less than 7 million deaths. In Cambodia there were 1.2 million deaths. In Laos, the Laotians killed each other in the number of 600,000. When [Communism] comes to Thailand, it might make the Thais kill each other. Even now when not many have come, over 10,000 of our fellow Thais were already dead. 120,000 government officials have been dead. They were the ones who protected the sovereignty of our country. As a Thai, we do not want Thais to kill Thais, therefore do not uphold Communism."[34]

According to Keyes, Kittivuddho also conjures up images of desecrated temples, of monks being killed by bestial types, the Communists: "Communists are not people, they are the devil, impurities and ideology personified . . . It is all right to kill an ideology, the Buddha taught us to do so."[35]

The strength of this argument comes from the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s, many other countries in Asia have "fallen" to Communism. The "Domino Theory" indicates that there would be good reason to conclude that the same fate could befall Thailand as well. The living history of many of our neighboring countries then could be the future of Thailand. According to Kittivuddha, in order to prevent this dire consequence to happen, Thailand is justified in killing Communists.

## LABELING VIOLENCE ON RELIGIOUS OTHERS

After the October 6, 1976, brutal killing of students and other civilians at Thammsat University, the question of Communism does not seem to bother Thailand again. Thai Buddhism has shown the more usual benign face for many years. And yet, as Thai society and politics became more democratic in the 1980s and 1990s, there developed yet another condition when an ultra-rightist Buddhist group established a network called, "Council of Buddhist Organization of Thailand." Some of the major publications of this group will be the focus of analysis for this third moment in Thai Buddhism when the question of violence, again, became a major concern.[36] As I have dealt with this issue elsewhere, the followings are based on my prior research.[37]

In the past decades, Thai Buddhism has gone through many precarious and oftentimes frustrating adventures. Public criticisms of the inertia of mainstream Sangha establishment, several sex scandals involving much-admired leading monks, proliferation of independent lay movements, reformist movements with the Sangha, aggressive proselytizing efforts from imported neo-Christian and Japanese healing cults, Buddhist feminist voices, etc., have created a wall of challenges for the Thai Sangha. In this process, there have been signs of intolerance *within* the Sangha as can be seen in the purging of the Santi Asoka movement in the late 1980s, and that of the Dhammakaya movement in the 1990s. However, at the turn of the new century, a new wave of intolerance spreading *against other religions* in Thai society has taken shape. The major reason of this recent ultra-conservative development might have been the proposal to set up a National Committee on Religion in the newly reformed Ministry of Culture and Religion[38], which will be charged with the authority to deal with all religious matters in the kingdom. One of the major criticisms of this idea is that the proposed plan is to include representatives from all religions in the national committee. In the eyes of the Thai public with certain democratic persuasion, this proposal sounds legitimate. It is a common practice of any democracy to have "representation" from all sizable groups in such an important administrative national body. However, in the eyes of some Buddhists, this proposed composition of the committee is far from acceptable. This is because Buddhism has been the *de facto national* religion. It is unthinkable to have some "*other*" religious representation in a committee which would jointly oversee all religious matters. In practice, Thai Buddhist concerns would have come under the decision-making process *of and from other religious minorities*. This proposed plan would have put Thai Buddhists *under* the supervision of other non-Buddhist Thais.

Perhaps even more importantly, this legal body would have been a symbolic indicator that the enduring equation of being Buddhist and being Thai would no longer hold true. The inclusion of other religious elements into a national religious body would subvert the sole monopoly of providing the national identity for the Thai nation through Buddhist symbols, rituals and teachings. At a seminar organized by the Council of Buddhist Organizations of Thailand, a recently established ultra-conservative group, a panelist pointed out that the white color in the national flag indicates *the* Buddhist religion, not just (any or a composite sense of) religion.[39]

If we understand tolerance to denote the way a given system treats various changes which do not corrupt its totality, we would understand that some elements at the core of Thai Buddhism, perceived recent changes as something beyond toleration, as they would "corrupt" Thai Buddhism's existing totality.[40] In line of this definition, then tolerance, in general, is an *index of the stability* of the system open for exposure.[41] In this sense the perceived threats to the stability of Thai Buddhism had prompted the building up of the ultra-conservative network, which supported the seminar

mentioned earlier. This network has also published books, spreading fears of "internal" and "external" dangers for Thai Buddhism,[42] mostly targeting the Christians. Commenting on the Vatican's policy of inter-religious dialogue or cultural assimilation, Phra Dhammapitaka argues that certain writings of some Catholic priests which indicate that God reveals the Law of Dependent Origination to the Buddha, are not an act of "dialogue" or "assimilation," they are an act of "domination." "*This domination is to put Buddhism within (the Christian framework) and put Christianity over it. To indicate that the Buddha is a messenger of God is a sign of Christian domination.*"[43] The Muslims' long history of intolerance is also highlighted through recounting the purging and burning of Buddhist centers in Northeast Asia in AD 1200. *"Around AD 1200 the Muslim Turkish army invaded the areas of Northeast Asia which was the center of Buddhism at that time. After taking control over the cities, Islam was propagated. The Muslim Turkish army had burned down Buddhist monasteries and Buddhist universities, killing monks and laypeople, forcing them to convert to Islam."*[44] These negative narratives of religious intolerance committed by the Muslim and the Christian *others* are juxtaposed with glorious history of Buddhist tolerance, especially in Thai history.[45]

In *Looking at World Peace*, Phra Dhammapitaka lays out five bases for religious persecution, none of which is present in Buddhism. They are:

(1) There are teachings in the canon which encourage or accept coercion to conversion.
(2) There are teachings or principles which could be used to justify wars or killings as acts which accrue merit or righteousness.
(3) There are teachings or principles which could be used to justify persecution or wars waged in the name of religion.
(4) There are opinions or understandings or interpretations which could not be settled through wisdom, persuasion, and reason, but could be used to wage wars even with same nationals believing in same religion.
(5) There are principles or sayings in the religion or the institution or religious authority which support or justify acts of destruction or wars.[46]

The author then gives the example of the Crusades and suggests that the reasons for such lack of religious tolerance are the absence of three principles of universality, all of which are amply present in Buddhism. They are: universality of truth, universality of humanity, and universality of compassion.[47]

It is interesting to note *how* the lack of these three universalities could be a basis for religious discrimination and persecution. In a monotheistic framework, "universality" is achieved through the conversion of all others into one Truth. In that process, the necessity of "changing" others into one's own image becomes crucial. The conversion of others could

be seen as an act of compassion. But it is a compassion which basically assumes one's prior belief in one's Truth as the only right one. That same process, when coupled with expansionist ambitions of political powers could become violent and deadly. On the other hand, it seems that Phra Dhammapitaka has brought out the Buddhist conception of universality which is based on the principle of dependent origination, not one Supreme God. In the Buddhist framework, the radical interdependence of life is the basis of universality of compassion. A crucial difference between the two frameworks is that in the Buddhist conception, there is no need *to transform the different others into one's image*. It is ontologically impossible, and ethically irrelevant to "convert" others into the Buddhist truth, especially within the limited framework of one life time. In this sense, one can argue that the virtue of tolerance is intrinsic to Buddhism. All the five bases for religious persecution are not only absent in Buddhism, they are actually philosophically untenable.

However, these three universalities which are distinctly present in Buddhism have yet to negotiate their ideal presence in Thai cultural world. As argued earlier, Buddhism as a philosophy and as manifested in historical developments has been credited with continuous respect for religious tolerance. Recent developments in Thai Buddhism seem to put that long history into question. It could be argued that the Buddhist ideal of universality has to contend with its role as the major basis of the Thai national identity. The values of Buddhism for Thai life are not limited to its efficacy in the cessation of suffering, but include its role in shaping the Thai national "unity." Recent publications on the "dangers" to Thai Buddhism by the Council of Buddhist Organizations in Thailand can be seen as a attempt to suggest to the Thai public that this conservative reaction is a necessity, sanctioned by not a group of religious fanatics, but by a leading voice of wisdom. Phra Dhammapitaka, in laying out ten major reasons why Buddhism is most important for the Thai nation, cites the following: "Buddhism is the principle which could maintain religious freedom (in Thailand)."[48] This particular reason is listed together with another, namely: "Buddhism is the crucial source of the concoction of Thai national identity."[49] When we combine these two statements, we are reminded that *only* Buddhism could maintain (as Buddhism has provided in the past) religious freedom in Thai society; and that *only* Buddhism could be the source of the Thai national identity. Thai Buddhism could best provide religious tolerance only if Buddhism is the sole basis of the Thai national identity.

## BUDDHISM TRANSCENDING THAI NATIONAL IDENTITY

The Buddhist Principle of Triple Universality, namely of truth, humanity, and compassion is a continuing development away from the five types of narrow jealousy (*majcariya*). They are:

(1) Jealousy regarding one's nation, region, and land
(2) Jealousy regarding one's family, group, tribe, clan, race, and religion
(3) Jealousy regarding one's wealth and profit
(4) Jealousy regarding one's caste and skin color
(5) Jealousy regarding one's knowledge, special gifts, goodness, wisdom, and progress[50]

A "true" education is a process, which helps one overcome these five types of major jealousy and gradually convince one into the three universalities. It is believed that peaceful co-existence between peoples could thus be achieved. It is not difficult to see that these five types of narrow-mindedness have served as crucial bases of intolerance at various levels, from the inter-personal, inter-regional, inter-racial, inter-religious to inter-national. This valuable lesson from Buddhism could help articulate the internal tensions within Thai Buddhism. On the one hand, Buddhism as a universal philosophy has led the way to impressive religious tolerance in Thai history. On the other, due to recent socio-political changes in Thailand, some Buddhist elements have articulated the different others as if they were the enemies. These five types of jealousy outlined by Phra Dhamma-pitaka should serve as a strong reminder to the Thai public of the necessity of Buddhism to transcend the Thai national identity, and reinvigorate its universal ideal.

It is interesting to note that at this third moment, Thai Buddhism offers an externalization of violence onto religious others, especially the Christians and the Muslims. The process of labeling violence onto others while portraying self as only peaceful is in some sense an irony. This is because this reductionist portrayal both of oneself and of others does not give heed to the complex histories, political contexts and the multi-vocality of all religious traditions. Given our analysis of the political condition and the publications of this ultra-rightist group, it seems that Thai Buddhism could best provide religious tolerance only when Buddhism is the sole basis of the Thai national identity.

## CONCLUDING NOTE

This chapter provides a broad analytical and critical portrayal of the question of violence in Thai Buddhism through three key moments in the Buddhist history. This is not meant to downplay the great contributions of Buddhism in the defense and promotion of peaceful co-existence among humanity. This is not to belittle the great tolerance Buddhist societies have shown to the religious others within their societies. Thailand has been a shining example. The purpose of this chapter is simply to respond to one important aspect of the question of violence in Buddhism, namely, the sensitive and precarious role of Buddhism as part of a state. The patron-client relationship which the Buddhist establishment in Thailand has enjoyed

in the past seven centuries has created a lasting condition for the shape and form of Buddhism in Thai society. Those shape and form are crucially related to the question of violence.

## NOTES

1. Steven Collins, "The Discourse on what is primary (Agganna sutta)," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 21 (December 1993).
2. Please see a good contemporary rendering of this *jataka* tale in Uthong Prasartwinitchai, *Journeying Through the Ten Jataka Tales in Mural Paintings* Vols. 1–2 (Bangkok: Namrin Party, B.E.2545).
3. Please see Nalin Swaris, *Buddhism, Human Rights and Social Renewal* (Hong Kong: Asian Human Commission, 2000).
4. Quoted in Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "The Leaders, the Lotus and the Shadow of the Dove: The Case of Thai Society," in *Buddhism and Leadership for Peace* (Tokyo: Soka University Peace Research Institute, 1986), 63
5. Ibid., 64.
6. Ibid. Later on, Phra Thep Moli was deprived of his ecclesiastical rank and was put under temple arrest for a while and was granted amnesty in early 1916.
7. Please see the interview by Kittivuddho in *Jaturat* 2:51 (June 29, 2519): 28–32.
8. Please see a good example, Somboon Suksmaran, *Buddhism and Politics in Thailand*. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982).
9. Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "The Leaders, the Lotus and the Shadow of the Dove: The Case of Thai Society," 67.
10. Ibid.
11. Please see a good exploration of the ways Buddhism has provided justifications for violence in Christopher Ives, "Dharma and Destruction: Buddhist Institutions and Violence," in *Contagion Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 9 (Spring 2002): 151–174. This article traces the shifting terrains of Buddhism and violence throughout the Buddhist history with special emphasis on how institutions of Buddhism have provided justifications for violence and wars.
12. Ibid., 65.
13. His Holiness Prince Vajiranana, Supreme Patriarch of Kingdom of Thailand, " The Buddhist Attitude towards National Defense and Administration" in *Phra Mongkolvises-gatha* (A Special Auspicious Allocution*)* (Bangkok: Mahamakut-Raja-vidyalai, B.E.2538), 61. This special sermon was delivered on the occasion of the King's birthday in 1916 and was translated into English by King Rama VI himself.
14. Ibid., 49–50.
15. Ibid., 50–51.
16. Ibid., 51–52.
17. Ibid., 52–53.
18. Ibid., 56.
19. It is interesting to note here that the Pali quotation from the *Paduma Jataka* as cited by the Supreme Patriarch emphasizes the importance of thorough investigation of wrong-doing, otherwise "let him not inflict punishment." But the Supreme Patriarch utilizes this passage to emphasize the necessity of punishment, not the importance of thorough investigation. The quotation is: "He who is a sovereign, not having investigated for himself, and not having

thoroughly been convinced of the guilt of others or the extent of such guilt, let him not inflict punishment." Please see Ibid., 56–57.

20. Ibid., 59. This could be seen as a defense of the decision of the King to give support to the Allies although the war in Europe posed no military danger to Siam at that time.
21. Ibid., 60. Emphasis by this author.
22. Ibid., 60–61.
23. This controversial interview was published in *Caturat*, 2/51 (June 29 B.E, 2519): 28–32.
24. Quoted in Charles F. Keyes, "Political Crisis and Militant Buddhism," in Bardwell L. Smith, Editor, *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma* (Pennsylvania: ANIMA Books South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1978), 153.
25. Please see a good discussion of Kittivuddho's role in context of the political crisis at that time in Ibid., 147–164.
26. *Caturat*, Op. Cit., p. 31. (Translation and emphasis by author.)
27. Charles F. Keyes, "Political Crisis and Militant Buddhism," 154.
28. Ibid.
29. Quoted in Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Quoted in Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Please see a complicated discussion of the chain of intention in the definition of an action in Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. by Kathleen Blamey (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), Third Study, footnote 12. Ricoeur discusses in this long footnote that an action can be named by the first thing one does or by the final result intended. Whether the agent is mentioned in each question and in each answer is of no importance to the series of reasons for acting ordered in accordance with the intended results. In our discussion of killing in order to protect the country, one theoretical difficulty is to identify which intention as definitive of the action under discussion. In other words, if one defines the action of killing with only the intention to kill, one would get a particular description of this act of killing. However, if one defines the act of killing *with* the intention to protect the country, not with the intention to kill, one would get another description of the same act. Kittivuddho seems to be manipulating this complicated question here. Although we are not suggesting that he was fully aware of this complex theoretical discussion.
34. *Caturat*, Op. Cit. p. 31. (Translation by this author).
35. Charles F. Keyes, "Political Crisis and Militant Buddhism," 155.
36. This paper has not covered recent violent incidents in the deep South in their relationship to Buddhism. Please see a good on-the-ground exploration of this recent phenomena in Duncan McCargo, "The Politics of Buddhist Identity in Thailand's deep south: The Demise of Civil Religion?," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40:1 (February 2009): 11–32.
37. Please see the original paper in Suwanna Satha-Anand, "Buddhist Pluralism and Religious Tolerance in Democratizing Thailand," in Philip Cam, ed., *Philosophy, Democracy and Education* (Seoul: The Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 2003), 193–213.
38. Partly due to protests from some Thai Buddhists, including many monks, the plan was dropped. At the moment, instead of the planned National Committee on Religion, a separate National Office of Buddhist Affairs was established outside both the Ministry of Education and outside the Ministry of Culture, and is under direct supervision by the Prime Minister, in the Prime

Minister's Office. While religious matters regarding other minority religions are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, like the way it used to be.

39. This author personally attended the seminar held at Chulalongkorn University, in early 2002. The four panelists at the seminar, titled "Threats to Buddhism in Thailand," spread much distrust and fear of the non-Buddhists in Thailand. They suggested possibility that a conspiracy between Christians and Muslims had resulted in various Government actions in the past years, actions that posed a serious threat to the stability of Thai Buddhism. Examples given were: the Thai government has granted permission to create new radio stations for Muslims in Thailand; the government had installed ablution places for Muslims at the Hua Lam Pong Railway Station; and the plan to set up the National Committee on Religious Affairs. Please a more detailed discussion of this issue as relating to cultural tolerance in Asia in Suwanna Satha-Anand," Signs of the Time and Cultural Tolerance in Asia" *API Newsletter* (The Nippon Foundation Fellowships for Asian Public Intellectuals) 3 (June 2002), 3–4.
40. Please see an interesting definition of tolerance in S.M. Hummel and M.B. Khomiakov, eds., *Tolerance* ( Ekaterinburg: Urals University Press, 2000), 63.
41. Ibid., 64.
42. Another example is Phra Dhammapitaka, *Dangers for Buddhism in Thailand* (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, B.E.2545). The preface for this volume was written by the President of the Council of Buddhist Organizations of Thailand, the recently established ultra-conservative network.
43. Ibid., 28–31. This is this author's translation. The phrase in parenthesis is added by this author for clarification.
44. Dhammapitaka, *Looking at World Peace Through Histories of Global Civilizations*, Ob. cit., 162.
45. Ibid., 38–43, 160–168.
46. Ibid., 48.
47. Ibid., 48–49.
48. Phra Dhammapitaka, *The Importance of Buddhism as National Religion* (Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, B.E.2539), 31–47.
49. Ibid., 65–69.

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# 9 Buddhism and the Justification of War with Focus on Chinese Buddhist History

*Xue Yu*

## INTRODUCTION

Ahimsa or non-violence is one of the most important precepts that both clergy and lay-people must observe in all Buddhist traditions. In Theravāda Buddhism, Buddhist clergy are requested to refrain from taking any violent action even for self-defense. They should not to be associated with military, the symbol of violence, nor should they be involved in war. Lay Buddhists are advised not to harm living beings and abstaining from leading a life that involves killing, such as butcher, hunter, fisher, robber, or dacoit. They are even discouraged to fight as soldiers in war. According to Vedic culture in which the Buddha lived, a warrior who dies in fight goes to heaven. Once a group of military leaders asks the Buddha's opinion on such belief, the Buddha hesitates to provide any answer to the question first, yet on being urged, he says that such a warrior will rather go to a special hell instead, because the mind of such warrior at the moment of dying is in an evil state of violence.[1] It is also said that the Buddha's kinsmen the Sakyas abandoned their resistance against the military invasion of King Vidudabha. This message of abstaining from military action in the earlier Buddhist texts is also echoed in later treatises, such as the *Abhidharmakosabhasya*, which states that a solidier is guilty of killing even if he is forcibly conscripted, unless he is determined not to kill anybody even for the sake of saving his own life.[2]

On several occasions, the Buddha personally intervened in military confrontation between different ethnic groups, helping to solve the conflict peacefully. Four years after the Buddha had attained enlightenment, a war was about to break out between Kapilavastu and Kolivastu due to water dispute. When the Buddha was informed of the news, he hastened to the battlefield and stood between the two armies which were about to kill each other. Summoning their commanders from both sides, the Buddha inquired about the cause of the conflict and then asked, "How much value do you think water has in comparison with the life of men?" When they both replied that the value of water could not be compared with the life of men, the Buddha asked again, "Why do you then destroy lives which are valuable for valueless water?"[3]

To many Buddhists, non-violence has made Buddhism well-known as a religion of peace. Narada, a Sri Lankan monk-scholar, once stated, "To the unique credit of Buddhism, it must be said that throughout its peaceful march of 2500 years, no drop of blood has been shed in the name of the Buddha."[4] Buddhist *ahimsa* has inspired millions of people and transformed numerous brutal and militant kings into peace lovers. King Asoka used to be a vicious king who killed his brothers in order to secure his kingdom; and tens of thousands of people died when he invaded Kalinga (modern Orissa). Yet, after he was converted to Buddhism, Asoka promulgated the Dharma and promoted non-violence, formally proscribing the taking of life, not only that of humans but also animals. Nevertheless, to a large extent, Buddhism is not entirely pacifist although it does not advocate militarism. A few Buddhist texts also provide various justifications for violence and advocate Buddhist military intervention. In these texts, the Buddha did not entirely stigmatize war, nor did he intend to prevent lay people from becoming soldiers or fighting in war as required by the state. In the *Mahaparinibbana sutta* of the Pali cannon, King Ajātashatru once sent two ministers to the Buddha to inquire about the outcome of an offensive attack he would like to launch against the clan confederation of Vajjis. The Buddha did not declare the offensive war to be immoral nor did he directly condemn military leaders who would initiate such the war. He merely stated that the attack would not be successful as long as the Vajjis maintained their traditional practices.[5]

## BUDDHIST JUSTIFICATION FOR VIOLENCE

The majority of Buddhist canonical books underlines the importance of the morality of non-violence, highlighting peaceful way in dealing with violence, yet a few texts, in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna tradition, do suggest alternatives. The *Agganna sutta*, which speculates the evolution of the human society, explains the craving and laziness of man as the original source for social conflict and violence, recognizing the use of force to punish evil doers so that social order can be maintained, and human lives and properties can be protected.[6] The *Chakravartin*, the universal monarch or Dharma King in Buddhism, maintains a powerful army as one of his seven treasures, ready to crush evil and to overcome violence wherever it occurs.[7] Mahāyāna literature provides more doctrinal justifications for the use of violence to eliminate violence or to save people's lives. In the following discussion, I will focus on examining two of such justifications: the idea of emptiness and compassionate killing.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the ultimate reality is "emptiness" (Sanskrit *sunyata*) and the knowledge on such the reality is the highest wisdom. Nothing exists permanently as an entity and all phenomena are in constant flux. A human being consists of five aggregates (matter, sensation,

perception, volition, and consciousness), within and without which there is nothing that can be called unchanging soul or self. Thus, no soul can be killed and no doer performs the act of violence or killing. The notion of the non-existence of the self enables Buddhists to see emptiness in every living being. A bodhisattva, having realized the emptiness of all existences, may perform the act of violence such as killing. In *Suthimati-devapūtra-paripucchā sutra* (聖善住意天子所問經), Sakyamuni Buddha and Manjusri Bodhisattva performed a "show" to demonstrate the idea of emptiness and non-existence of self to five bodhisattvas, who could not attain enlightenment because they were constantly repenting on their past karma of killing. Under the mental instruction of the Buddha, Manjusri takes a sharp knife in his right hand and charges toward the Buddha as if he is going to kill the Buddha. The Buddha uttered, "Manjusri, there is no action of killing and that you can not kill the Buddha." Having heard what the Buddha said, the five bodhisattvas suddenly realized the emptiness of self, man, sentient being, of father, mother, *Arhat*, and of the Buddha.[8] All conceptualized sins or merits are just human imagination and illusion.

The idea of the emptiness in killing is also elaborated in the *Nirvana Sutra*. Prince Ajatasatru had his father, King Bimbisara, murdered so that he could ascend the throne. Later on, he felt sharp remorse and visited Buddha for advice. The Buddha consulted him with the doctrine of emptiness by analyzing the nature of killing and the illusion of karmic consequence. One cannot perform the action of killing independently, the Buddha explained, it is in fact performed by cause and conditions. The major cause of the death of King Bimbisāra is largely due to the fact that he had once murdered an ascetic in his previous life. Then the Buddha stated: "Great King, it is like the echo of a voice in the mountain valleys. The ignorant think it is a real voice, but the wise know it is not. Killing is like this. The foolish think it is real, but the Buddha knows it is not."[9]

Wisdom and compassion are two major elements of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Seeing into emptiness is the highest wisdom, while the highest form of compassion is the compassion without condition and limitation. Wisdom enables one to see things as they are, emptiness, and great compassion compels one to release others from suffering even by using of violence, even though the one knows the consequence of such violence. Nevertheless, there is a controversial whether one can actually carry out killing with compassion in Theravāda tradition. At a time, a certain monk was seriously ill. Out of compassion monks spoken in praise of death to him, and the monk died. Those monks were full of regret, thinking, "The Blessed One has laid down a precept. What if we have committed an offence involving defeat?" They informed the Blessed One of the situation, and he told them: "Monks, you have committed an offence involving defeat."[10]

According to Damien Keown's analysis of this case, the good motivation of compassion of the monks is an insufficient condition for determining whether an act of killing is moral or immoral. The fact that monks'

action was declared guilty by the Buddha should be understood in reference to a legal distinction between motivation and intention: the monks' motivation to release a sick monk from suffering is good, yet their intention and action of killing him is bad.[11] However, Rupert Gethin in his counterargument claims that it is indeed impossible to do the killing from an immediate motive such as compassion. "It is a psychological impossibility, a psychological contradiction in terms that one should, when motivated by nonattachment, friendliness (and wisdom), intentionally kill another living being."[12] Gethin does not deny the possibility of performing the act of killing out of genuine compassion, yet he refutes the assertion that the decisive intention leading to the killing can be other than unwholesome. Thus, although monks thought that they had killed the sick monk out of compassion, it is only their imagination as they were unable to see in depth their motivation which is in reality rooted in aversion and ignorance, absent of compassion and wisdom at the moment of killing.

The definition of good and bad in Theravāda tradition, as the two scholars examined, highlights the significance of volition or intention which decides the nature of action and generates karmic consequence either morally wholesome or unwholesome. Yet Mahāyāna Buddhism goes beyond the Theravāda definition of being good and bad, and while advocating of doing the good and avoiding of the bad, it highlights the universal compassion for all living beings without discrimination, absolutizing the necessity of benefiting other living beings through skillful means. Loving-kindness and compassion (慈悲) in Mahāyāna tradition becomes the highest morality that may substitute other moral principles, even non-killing. Both clergy and lay Buddhists should practice loving-kindness and compassion through skillful means (*upaya* 方便). Instead of observing three monastic rules of Theravāda Buddhism, that is, simplicity, non-killing, and celibacy,[13] Mahāyāna tradition summarizes the bodhisattva's precepts in following three principles: refrain from doing what is evil; perform what is good; and constantly benefit all living beings. In order to fulfill the last and highest principle and to serve others with loving-kindness and compassion, Bodhisattvas may sometimes ignore the first two principles. In other words, Bodhisattvas who follow the path of loving-kindness and compassion may disregard worldly morality and commit to violence if such the violence is to benefit more living beings.[14] They may even kill evil ones if such an act of killing is aimed at saving more lives or at safeguarding the Dharma.[15]

In the *Mahā-upāya-kauśalya sutra* (佛說大方廣善巧方便經), the Buddha told a story about how he in one of his previous lives as Bodhisattva had performed the act of killing out compassion. On one occasion, five hundred merchants adventured to sea in search of treasures. One evil merchant, however, was overpowered by greed and secretly planned to murder the others so that he alone could keep all the treasures. A deity discovered his secret and informed the bodhisattva of the merchant's intention. To the dilemma of the Bodhisattva: the evil merchant would likely be killed by the

others if his murderous plot was revealed, and the other merchants would consequently fall into hell. However, if the bodhisattva remained silent, all other merchants would be killed by the evil one, who, as a result of his crime, would fall into hell. Finally, the Bodhisattva decided to kill the evil one so that the others could be saved.[16] At the end of the sermon, the Buddha declared that, out of compassion and for the sake of saving more living beings, Bodhisattva would not allow others to kill or to be killed. Instead, he would rather kill a potential killer even though he was aware of the consequence of such killing.

## MILITARY IDEA IN BUDDHISM

War is one of the worst forms of violence and military is one of the most efficient instruments for killing. Although the majority of Buddhist literature condemns violence, a few texts as demonstrated earlier also endorse violence under certain circumstances such as out of compassion to save more lives and safeguarding the Dharma. Similarly, Buddhism does not entirely deny military practice in safeguarding a nation or protecting people's life although it advocates the caution that military intervention can only be the last resort in dealing with inevitable violence. This is elaborated in the *Mahasatya nirgrantha-putra vyakarana sutra*.[17]

The sutra, which consists of ten chapters, was translated into Chinese by an Indian monk Bodhiruci (菩提留支) in 502 A.D.[18] The first three chapter records questions and answers between Manjusri and the Buddha on the doctrine of *Upaya*. Chapters four to nine account the teaching of Mahasatya Nirgrantha Putra, a Jain ascetic, on state affairs and militarism to King Candala, and the last chapter reports the meeting of the Sakyamuni Buddha and Nirgrantha Putra. The large part of sutra is therefore preached by Nigrantha Putra instead of the Buddha as the title of the sutra itself indicates. Nevertheless, the sutra specifically points out that Nigrantha Putra is a Bodhisattva in disguise, who teaches the Dharma with skillful means, as it states: "Heretics with great supernatural power are in fact Bodhisattvas of freedom, and it should be known that they appear in [heretical] form with skillful means. Bodhisattvas, having listened to the teachings of the heretics of great skillful means, are delighted with appreciative joy, generating respect, devotion, and veneration [towards them]."[19] At the end of the sutra, the Buddha, upon the request of Manjusri and others, predicted that Nirgrantha Putra would eventually attain Buddhahood and his Buddha world is called Suvicarita (善觀). Thus, although the sutra is largely preached by Nirgrantha Putra, the Buddha and his disciples recognized its Dharmic authenticity, and Nirgrantha Puta in fact is teaching the Dharma as a Bodhisattva on behalf of the Buddha although he appears in heretic form.

The fourth chapter begins with the arrival of Nigrantha Putra and his disciples in the kingdom of King Candala, who together with numerous

others went to receive the ascetics and inquired about the state affairs of the Dharma king (行王行法, literally means one who practices both kingship and the Dharma). Nigrantha Putra told the king several ways of being a Dharma king, such as absence of craving, angry, and ignorance and observing the Five Precepts. He highlighted the vital importance of loving-kindness instead of hatred in dealing with evil doers such as invaders. "The wise king knows the loving-kindness without simply scolding or blaming them [evil doers]. He endeavors to eliminate their evils yet without terminating their lives. Their bodies, hands, legs, feet, eyes, ears, nose, and tongue may not be cut off. By showing great loving-kindness and compassion, the king has them put into prison, or they may be cuffed, beaten or tightened. The Dharma king may also send them on exile while confiscate their properties. In order to force them to repent, the king should not entertain any evil thought to expel them. This is loving-kindness without hatred."[20] Punishment in kingship is necessary yet it is implemented with loving-kindness and compassion. It is like parents in dealing with their wicked sons. They would neither abandon them nor take away their lives or break their organs. Instead, they may employ all other means, such as beating and scolding, so that their evil actions are punished. The parents carry out the punishment with loving-kindness without evil or vexed thought but with the intentional hope that their sons may repent and refrain from doing the evil again. Similarly, the Dharma king, out of loving-kindness and compassion, may torture evil doers by physical punishment and scolding them except killing them.[21] By doing so, he neither violates the Dharma nor disregards loving-kindness and compassion.

Rebellion is one of the most serious crimes, and three actions are recommended to deal with a rebel king: (1) scolding and admonishing him, (2) confiscating his properties, (3) imprisoning, beating, torturing, and expelling him on exile, etc. The Dharma king should not take away everything from the rebel king, but one-sixth of his total properties. He may admonish the rebel king with kind words and pardon him after his surrendering and begging for forgiveness. Finally, the Dharma king releases the rebel king back to his territory without annexing or occupying his lands. By doing so, the worthiness of faith, kindness, and great power of the Dharma king may be established and spread out so that those who are not yet subdued will surrender and those who intend to rebel would give up. Nevertheless, severe punishment should be inflicted upon those who refuse to surrender, yet they should not be killed and their bodies should not be cut off. All their properties, people, and lands should be confiscated, while they are expelled to remote areas so that they may not be able to insurrect again.

The text highlights the importance of non-killing. The Dharma king may punish the evil doers by all other means except killing of their lives. Then, can the Dharma king kill evil doers with loving-kindness? The answer is still "No," because, as the text explains, "The thought of killing living beings or cutting off their bodies cannot arise with pure mind

absent of evil. Why? The Dharma king sees that evil doers at the moment of death give rise to hatred due to their own karmic force. They are thus born into evil states after death, and the evil thoughts follow them throughout rebirth. Therefore, the Dharma king will not kill them or cut their organs. Why? Because their lives cannot be returned and their bodies cannot be recovered once killing and cutting are done. The action of bounding, imprisoning, cuffing, beating, or scolding will not end their lives forever. Therefore, in following the teaching of the Buddha, terminating one's life or cutting off one's organs for the sake of protecting other people may not be called the perfect way, because killing a life and cutting one's organs are the most terrible things of the world, and the Buddha may not allow the Dharma king to do so."[22] This idea of the impracticability of killing out of loving-kindness and compassion echoes the claim of Rupert Gethin, and three reasons are given that one should not commit to killing even with loving-kindness and compassion. First, one cannot give life back to a person once he is killed. Second, a person who is killed harbors hatred, which will accompany him throughout rebirth and give rise to revenge. Third, the death through killing is one of the most fearsome phenomena of the world that everyone would avoid.

Should this mean that the Dharma king should refrain from any kind of violence against violence such as military invasion and rebellion? In other words, what he should do when his kingdom is in danger? When military invasion and insurgence have occurred, the king prepares for war and lay down the strategies for the beginning, middle, and end of war, respectively. He makes the following three considerations at the first stage. First, if the troops of the rebel king are equal or superior to that of the Dharma king, both sides will suffer heavy causalities and deaths of lives once a full-scaled war breaks out. "If the enemy's troops overcome mine, I would be dead and he survives." Having thought thus, the Dharma king seeks the help of the relatives, friends, or associates of rebel king, finding a peaceful solution for the conflict. Second, when the Dharma King realizes the superiority or equality of the rebel king's troops, he knows that he should not go to war, instead he offers material wealth to seek for the end of the conflict. Third, when the Dharma king sees the over-numbered relatives, friends, as well as the troops of elephants, horses, charterers, and infantry of the rebel king, yet he still thinks his troops can be victory. He displays the troops which are full of morale and courage, and endowed with skillful means in order to deter the attack of enemies. By so doing, the rebel king may be frightened and thus withdraw from the conflict.

Once the strategy of negotiation, offering, and frightening fails to end confrontation, the Dharma king perceives following three thoughts. First, the rebel king is fond of killing others without loving-kindness and compassion, and he will not prevent others from killing each other. "I should not allow such random killing." This is the initial thought of the king in protecting people. Second, the Dharma king subdues the rebel king through

skillful means so that his generals and soldiers may not be engaged in killing. Third, the Dharma king, by skillful means, captures the rebel king alive without killing him. Having had these three thoughts out of loving-kindness and compassion, the Dharma king then commands his fourfold troops to be prepared, issuing orders, and assigning duties to them. He selects qualified soldiers and divides them into three grades, and then the highest grade is further divided into three levels of high, middle, and low. The brave soldiers of the low levels in the high grade are displayed in the front of a battle. This is followed by the soldiers of the middle levels in the middle grade. The cavalry of the high level in the high grade are displayed in the wing-sides to protect the infantry so that they may not be threatened and frightened. The Dharma king then leads the fourfold troops of the high level in the high grade charge to the battle from the middle. Five reasons are given for soldiers to march forward bravely without fear and retreat: (1) feeling guilty towards the king, (2) afraid of the king, (3) to please the king, (4) no threat from behind, and (5) repay the kindness of the king. Only then will soldiers fight heroically against the enemies.

Once a war breaks out, killing of lives is inevitable. Yet, according to the sutra, the Dharma king, having thus made efforts to prevent the war and arranged for the fighting may incur a little sin even if the killing of people has actually taken place. He even may not necessarily experience the consequence of such sin as repent may just eliminate it at all. This is because "the Dharma king has generated threefold mind of loving-kindness and compassion. Even though he has committed evil deed, the sin resulted in this deed is so little and it is not necessary for him even to experience the result of the sin."[23] The Dharma king would sacrifice his life and properties in order to maintain the order among people, protect ascetics, and safeguard their teachings, look after the wives and sons of people, and fellow members of a clan. The karma resulted in this kind of acts may instead generate great blessings and merits. Therefore, in order to protect a nation and safeguard the lives of ordinary people, the Dharma king goes to war while keeping the threefold mind of loving-kindness and compassion in fighting. Under his orders and through his example, the soldiers and generals of the Dharma king fight the war with courage, and no sin but blessing will occur to them.

## MILITARY PRACTICE IN BUDDHIST HISTORY

We have discussed the doctrinal advocacies for violence in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna tradition, although the majority of Buddhist texts highlights the importance of non-violence. Similarly, although numerous evidences can be cited to demonstrate the practice of non-violence in Buddhist history, incidents have also occurred to reveal Buddhist military spirit and participation in war. To some people, this inconsistence shows the

discrepancy and incredibility of Buddhism, yet to others, it manifests Buddhist efforts in reconciling ideal of *ahimsa* and reality of violence in the world, and thus the discrepancy does not necessarily invalidate Buddhist norms and practice. Schmithausen once says: "Greed for power or goods, fear of invaders, or disgust with foreign intruders may incite Buddhists, especially kings and other political leaders, to wage war in spite of the norm, and this has happened in most, if not all, Buddhist countries."[24] Buddhists in different regions throughout history have been involved in violence and military struggles. Even in Southeast Asia, particularly Sri Lanka and Thailand where conservative Theravāda has predominated, Buddhist kings also often waged offensive war against one another.

When Ven. Narada made the statement that Buddhism has always contributed to peace, he seems to have deliberately disregarded a well-known incident in the history of his own country where King Duttagāmani (101–177 BCE), as recorded in *Mahāvamsa*, fought a war against Tamil invasion with Buddha's relic as his banner. Many monks joined his troops to fight the war for the sake of reestablishing Buddhism in the country.[25] In the modern history of Sri Lanka, monks also actively participated in and even led the struggled for national independence from British colonialism in the first half of the twentieth century. In more recent years since 1983 many monks have been directly or indirectly involved in a military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam.[26] They made use of canonical and post-canonical texts to justify their claim that the war on the Tamil was intended to protect the Dharma, which the Buddha had entrusted to Sinhalese people 2500 year ago. Tessa Bartholomeusz in her book entitled *In Defense of Dharma: Just-War Ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka*, examines the Buddhist idea of non-violence as prima facie obligations on the one hand, and the Buddhist acceptance and practice of violence against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam on the other.[27] Her study reveal that "while there is a narrative thread in Sri Lankan Buddhist history and in contemporary rhetoric that endorses pacifism, there are Buddhist stories that argue that, for the defense of Buddhism—that is, of the Dharma—violence and war are permissible, even necessary, under certain conditions."[28] Sinhalese Buddhists, who consider themselves as Buddha-trusted people and their nation as the Buddha-Land, have thus developed the just war theory. They would use all means to fulfill the religious duties and defending their nation even by resorting to violence. Buddhist violence in Sri Lanka shows that Buddhists, particularly those who serve as kings and warriors, observe Buddhist norms wherever they do not conflict with their worldly duties and justify their worldly actions by reinterpreting Buddhist doctrine.

The history of Japanese Buddhism has witnessed a militant spirit among the Sangha from the middle ages. During the Heian period (794–1185), militant monks were trained and employed to invade others' temples or to protect their own temples from invasion. During the Tokugawa period (1600–1867), Zen Buddhism facilitated the development of swordsmanship,

and Zen became the spiritual source of samurai or warrior class. In the modern history before the end of the Second World War, Buddhist leaders in Japan made use of Buddhism to serve Japanese nationalism and imperialism and supported Japanese aggression against other Asian countries. One of typical examples is D.T. Suzuki who revived traditional connection between Zen and the samurai sword and urged Buddhists to selflessly support imperial warfare and fought war as religious practice against other countries. Under the national policy of State Shinto and inspired by the call of Buddhist leaders, a large number of Japanese priests, having replaced their Buddhist robes with military uniforms, joined the military of invasion, killing millions of Asian people. They justified their action by asserting that Japan waged war against China and other Asian countries for the sake of protecting Buddhism and saving Asian people from being slaves of the West.[29]

Throughout Chinese Buddhist history, monks were also often seen involved in military conflict and war. In 515, a monk called Faqing rallied behind him more than 50,000 Buddhists, and rebelled against the Northern Wei dynasty. Inspired by the messianic idea of the returning of Maitreya Bodhisattva, Faqing took the title of "Mahāyāna Buddha" and declared himself a new Buddha. He proclaimed that the more enemies a Buddhist killed, the more he advanced in his spiritual attainment. One would win the title of the bodhisattva of the "First Stage"[30] if he killed one enemy; and one who killed ten would attain the Tenth Stage and attain enlightenment.[31] It is also well-known in Chinese Buddhist history that monks from Shaolin Temple helped Emperor Taizong (唐太宗) to win his empire and assisted the Ming dynasty in resisting the invasion of Japanese pirates in the 1600s.

The resistance war against the Japanese invasion from 1931 to 1945 witnessed Buddhist participation in violence in modern Chinese history. Buddhist clergy, especially young monks under the influence of nationalism advocated Buddhist violence against Japanese invasion. In following the principle of benefiting all living beings, these Buddhist announced they were duty-bound to prevent Japanese from killing Chinese citizens. In 1933, Liangshan (亮山), a monk and master of martial arts, gathered more than three hundred Buddhists, both clergy and laity, around him, and formed an anti-Japanese base inside a mountain at Hongliu Shan in Jinxi (錦西).[32] He often led the troops out of the mountain to attack Japanese military camps, inflicting casualties on Japanese soldiers. His fame was soon widespread in the area and many other resistance forces came to join him. In the south, when Japanese troops advanced to Yixing (宜興) at the end of 1937, Henghai (恆海), the abbot of Chenguan Temple, organized guerrilla war against Japanese occupation. He trained more than a thousand monks and lay Buddhists from nearby areas into brave militants. Later on, his troops were joined by other resistance forces in the region and actively waged a guerrilla war against Japanese.[33] In 1938, a group of Buddhist nuns in Wuhan participated in the defense of Wuhan. Later they joined the army,

replacing their robes with military uniforms, and marched to the battlefield with other Chinese soldiers.[34]

Zhenwei (振威) was the abbot of Tongshan Temple at Wukang (武康) County in northern Zhejiang province. He offered his temple as a secret base for anti-Japanese forces in 1937. His temple was located deep inside a mountain surrounded by trees and bushes; it was an ideal place to launch guerrilla warfare. When Japanese troops occupied Wukang, more than one hundred refugees from nearby villages escaped to the temple. Zhenwei trained these refugees in martial arts and recruited them into a resistance force. For the next few years, Zhenwei often led groups of guerrillas to assail the Japanese troops stationed in Wukang during night, and returned to the temple before dawn. Their activities caused heavy casualties to Japanese soldiers, deterred Chinese people from cooperating with Japanese. Meanwhile, their actions inspired villagers to resist the Japanese occupation and fight against Chinese traitors.[35]

In June of 1939, the Young Buddhist Service Team (佛教青年服務團 *Fojiao qingnian fuwu tuan*), which consisted dozens of "monk-soldiers" (和尚兵 *heshangbing*), was organized in Changsha. After short period of military training, they penetrated Japanese occupied areas to perform the tasks of assassinating traitors[36] and sabotaging the facilities of Japanese military and civilian organizations. Limiao, a young monk from Beijing, was assigned to the north of Hunan together with some of his colleagues, and secretly engaged in collecting Japanese military information and destroying the transportation system of the local puppet government. In October 1940, he was captured and tortured by Japanese. His eyes were gouged out and his ears cut off, yet he never gave in. Before he died, Limiao repeatedly shouted the slogan of "Long Live the Republic of China." Thus, he became one of Buddhist martyrs who sacrificed their lives in protecting the nation in modern Chinese history.

## CONCLUSION

By examining Buddhist doctrine and history of both Mahāyāna and Theravāda tradition, we may realize that there are discrepancies with regard to the ethics of non-violence and the justification for violence and military practice. Although the majority of Buddhist texts emphatically affirm the disciplinary rule that lay Buddhists should refrain from killing while monks and nuns should not be involved with military affairs and war, a few texts, directly or indirectly, endorses justification for violence and military actions under certain circumstances. In other words, the majority of Buddhist texts advocate peace, love-kindness, and compassion, while the permission for violence and militarism can also be found in a few others. It is thus left for Buddhists to decide whether they should follow the path of peace or pursue the course of violence, or whether they should take part in military activities.

Loving-kindness and compassion is a Buddhist way for the peaceful co-existence of mankind. Yet, out of loving kindness and compassion one may also resort to violence to deal with conflict, thus achieving peace and restoring the order of the world. Buddhists have made use of this idea to justify their participation in military activities, ignoring the issue who can actually perform such compassionate killing. According to Augustine, the great formulator of the Christian just war theory, war could be waged as the instrument of divine judgment on the wickedness, yet only one with true and right *love* can fight such war. No ordinary man but God is capable of such *love,* therefore, *only* God is capable of waging just war with love.[37] Yet throughout history, Christians fought numerous wars in the name of God's love. Similarly, it is quite difficult if not impossible for ordinary people full of hatred to carry out violence or participate in military action with loving-kindness and out of compassion. Yet Buddhists both in China and other countries have applied this idea indiscriminatively to their practice.

Both the *Maha-upaya-kausalya sutra* and the *Maha-paranirvana sutra*[38] are often cited by Buddhists to justify their involvement in violence particularly in military activities. The first one records the event that the Bodhisattva killed the evil merchant in order to save more others, while the second relates the incident that the Bodhisattva murdered an evil Brahman who was about to destroy the Dharma. In the first case the Bodhisattva was aware of the possibility that his act of killing the merchant would result in the retribution in hell for eons yet he carried out the act anyhow for the sake of saving other merchants' lives. In the second case, the Bodhisattva who kills the Brahman bears no karmic fruit and will not go to hell because the Brahman who is like an *Ichandhi* does not have faith in what is right, and killing such person is not different from hurting the dead body. In this particular case, the killing of the Brahman is compared with the killing of a child with parental love. When the child is about to commit serious crimes, the parents will expel or even kill him, fearing that the child will be tortured by the consequence of his crimes if he is allowed to perform such crime. Nevertheless, the text emphasizes the condition for the killing when the killing actually takes place that not only the killer but also the killed should not possess any evil thought. Only then could it be called compassionate killing.

In comparison, the *Mahasatya nirgrantha-putra vyakarana sutra* highlights the justification for the military violence against invasion. The Dharma King, out of compassion, may use military force to crush rebel king's troops although this is the last resort in dealing with inevitable violence. His action will result in evil karma, yet he may not experience the consequence of the karma as repent and remorse will eliminate the retribution of the karma. Military violence certainly involves massive killing, yet the king who is responsible for such killing may not experience the consequence o suffering. Thus, it seems that the *Mahasatya nirgrantha-putra vyakarana sutra* endorses military resistance against invasion and encourages the king to fight justifiable war.

**NOTES**

1. T. 2:227b–228a.
2. *Abhidharmakosabhasya of Vasubandhu*, ed. by P. Pradhan (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1967), 243, 8f.
3. Ohrui Jun, "A View of War in Buddhism," *The Institute for Asian Studies* (Tokyo University) 2 (1964): 57.
4. Narada, *The Buddha and His Teachings* (Singapore: Dharma and Tusita Senanayaka, 1980), 169.
5. DN II: 72–76.
6. *Dīgha Nikāya* (27th Sutta) (Landon: Pali Text Society): (v. 3) 85–86. The corresponding record can also be found in *Ekottaragama*. T. 26 (125): 737a–c.
7. T. 1: 39b, T. 1:119c, 1:317b, and 372b.
8. T. 12 (341): 131c27–132b17.
9. T. 12 (374): 484a. The translation is quoted from *The Collected Works of Shinran* (Kyoto: Jodo Shinshu Honganji-Ha, 1997, Vol. 1): 136. In the *Ajatastru-kaukrtya-vinodana-sutra*, it is said that Ajatastru would first suffer in hell and then be born in a heaven.
10. Vinaya, iii 79.
11. Damian Keown, *Buddhism and Bioethics* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 62–64.
12. Rupert Gethin, "Can Killing a Living Being Ever Be an Act of Compassion? The analysis of the act of killing in the Abhidhamma and Pali Commentaries," in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 11 (2004): 178.
13. John Ferguson, *War and Peace in the World's Religions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 46–47.
14. T. 12 (374): 383b–384b, *Mahaparinirvana sutra*. It says that the true followers of Mahayana may ignore the moral precepts in order to protect Dharma and Sangha.
15. John Ferguson, having compared different sources that discuss the bodhisattva precepts and violence, summarizes five principles according to which a bodhisattva can engage in violence and killing. First, when the Dharma is in danger, Buddhists may take up arms in its defense. Second, the bodhisattva may kill one who is about to kill many. Third, killing is non-killing for one who realizes the illusory nature of existence. Fourth, Buddhists may kill those who attempt to kill others so that the former may prevent the latter from the consequent suffering. Finally, it is not a sin to kill because everyone's destiny is predetermined as claimed by Nichiren. John Ferguson, *War and Peace in the World's Religions, 55–56.*
16. T. 12 (346): 175c–176b. A similar story is also told in the *Yogacāra-bhūmi Śastra,* which was often quoted by Chinese monks in their justification to participate in the Anti-Japanese War.
17. Chinese【大薩遮尼乾子所說經】. This sutra is a long version of *Bodhisattva-gocara upaya-visaya-vikurvana-nidesa sutra* (菩薩行方便境界神通變化經 T. 9 (271) (300–315), where the parts on kingship are missing.
18. Bodhiruci or 菩提流支 was an Indian monk who arrived in China in 508 A.D and was well-received by Emperor Xuanwu of the North Wei dynasty. For almost 20 years of staying in China, he translated more than 30 sutras into Chinese.
19. T. 9 (272) 327c.
20. T. 9 (272) 333b.
21. A comparison can be made between the *Mahasatya nirgrantha-putra vyakarana sutra* and *Mahaparanirvāna sutra* (T. 12 (374): 459c–460a.) According to the *Mahaparanirvana sutra*, the Buddha in one of his previous lives killed a Brahman who was about to commit the crime of destroying

Buddhism, and who would then fall into hell. The Buddha justified such the killing by comparing it with the killing of a child with parental love. When the child is about to commit serious crimes, the parents will expel or even kill him, fearing that the child will be tortured by the consequence of his crime if he is allowed to perform it. Nevertheless, the text emphasizes the condition for the killing with compassion that when the killing actually takes place, not only the killer but also the killed should not possess any evil thought. Only then could it be called compassionate killing.

22. T. 9 (272) 336c.
23. T. 9 (272) 338a.
24. Lambert Schmithausen, "Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude towards War," in Jan E.M. Houben and Karel R. Ven Kooij, eds., *Violence Denied: Violence, Non-Violence, and Rationalization of Violence in South Asia Cultural History* (Brill: Leiden, 1999), 52.
25. Lambert Schmithausen asserts the argument of King Duttagāmani was stimulated by Mahāyāna Buddhism which existed one or two centuries earlier in Sri Lanka. Lambert Schmithausen, 57.
26. See Jayaraja Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed? Religion, politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
27. Tessa Bartholomeusz, *In Defense of Dharma: Just-War ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003).
28. Tessa Bartholomeusz, "In Defense of Dharma: Just-War Ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka," in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6 (1999), 1.
29. Brian Victoria, *Zen at War* (New York: Weatherhill, 1997); Hishiki Masaharu. *Jōdo shinshu no sensō sekinin* 浄土真宗の戦争責任 (The True Pure Land Sect and the War Responsibility) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1993); Ichikawa Hakugen. *Bukkyō no senso sekinin* 仏教の戦争責任 (The War Responsibility of Buddhism) (Tokyo: Hozokan, 1993).
30. In the path of bodhisattva, there are ten stages or residence that gradually leads one to attain Buddhahood.
31. Paul Demieville, "Le Bouddhisme et la guerre" in *Melanges 1.* (Paris: Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1957), 357–359.
32. Zhenghua 震華, *Sengjie huguo shi* (僧伽護國史 History of Monks' Protecting the Nation) (Taibei: Liulijingfan, 1976), 117.
33. Dongchu, *Zhongguo fojiao jindai shi* (中國佛教近代史 History of Modern Chinese Buddhism) (Taibei: Zhonghua fojiao wenhuaguan, 1974), 946–947.
34. There are a few materials on how Buddhist nuns acted in the war. Another one records that some Buddhist nuns in Shanghai organized themselves to make military uniforms for the soldiers. Dongchu, *Zhongguo fojiao jindai shi* (中國佛教近代史 History of Modern Chinese Buddhism) (Taibei: Zhonghua fojiao wenhuaguan, 1974), 945.
35. Leguan, "A Unknown Monk Hero," in *Hai chao yin* 28:8 (1947): 20–21.
36. The term is often used to indicate those who had collaborated with the Japanese during the Second World War.
37. William Stevenson Jr., *Christian Love and Just War: Moral Paradox and Political Life in St. Augustine and His Modern Interpreters* (Mercer University Press, 1987), 77–113.
38. T. 12 (374): 459c–460a.

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# 10 Anti-War and Peace Movements among Japanese Buddhists after the Second World War

*Kawase Takaya, translated by Micah L. Auerback*

## INTRODUCTION

Japan is perceived as the most secularized society in Asia. To be sure, in Japanese public opinion polls, the percentage of respondents saying that "I have a religious faith" is low, and many Japanese do not hesitate to inform others, "I have no religion." On the other hand, Japan is one of the world's leading "newly religious" powers, having given birth to many new religions from the nineteenth century to the present. If we were to offer a simple explanation for such religious situation in Japan, which at first glance appears contradictory, then we could give as one reason a "religious division of labor," by which most Japanese leave funerals alone up to the Buddhist denominations (there is even a term of derision, "funerary Buddhism"), but in which other religious "salvation" is actually undertaken by the new religions. However, it is also a fact that, while they might be ridiculed as "funerary Buddhism," the various denominations of Japanese Buddhism have had a powerful influence through the modern and contemporary periods. In spite of this, we cannot overlook the fact that, in the period after the Second World War, new religions originating in Buddhism have grown in power and increased their social influence.

In this chapter, I would like to offer a simple account of part of the wartime cooperation by Buddhist denominations before 1945; to introduce the course of anti-war and peace movements after 1945; and to consider the nature of Japanese Buddhism from a postcolonial perspective.

## WARTIME COOPERATION BY JAPANESE BUDDHIST DENOMINATIONS BEFORE 1945

Here I offer an overview of the history of Buddhism after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, and its relationship with the military and imperialism, through the actual case of one representative denomination (True Pure Land Buddhism).

Until the Meiji Restoration (1868), Japanese Buddhism was placed under the supervision of the Tokugawa *bakufu* or military government, assigned a role as its organizational tool, which monitored the population registry and religious affiliation. Buddhism was the de facto "state religion" of the Edo period (1600–1868). This mode of being was to cause the birth of the aforementioned "funerary Buddhism;" once the Meiji government had weakened the power of Buddhism, it decided to set up the emperor (*Tennō*), who until then had had almost no relationship with the common people, as a symbol of national unity, and it adopted a policy of instructing the citizenry in "Mikado worship."[1] It was Shrine Shintō, seen as having a connection with the imperial house stretching back to mythic times, which was mobilized in order to instruct the citizenry in this Mikado worship. The policy of making Shintō a national religion was obliged to fail by opposition from Buddhism and the common people, and by negotiations over Christianity with foreign powers, and in the end, the government did guarantee freedom of religion in the Imperial Constitution (1889), but at the same time, it defined shrine cults and Tennō worship as "citizens' duties, but not religious activities," and it perfected a situation in which the "sacred canopy" known as "Tennō worship and shrine cults" overhung the various religions. This is known as the "system of State Shintō." This system was rapidly strengthened, and was maintained until Japan's defeat in the war.

The Buddhist denominations resisted the policy of making Shintō the national religion, and they succeeded in abolishing the policy, but they actively accepted Mikado worship, and a syncretism between Buddhist faith and Mikado worship went forward. Naturally, this Mikado worship linked directly to nationalism, and the Buddhist denominations actively affirmed the wars that occurred during Japan's modern era, and were not reluctant to support them.

Japanese Buddhist cooperation in war became concrete in the 1894 war between Japan and the Qing Empire (the first Sino-Japanese War), and the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War. It is known that in this period, there appeared chaplain monks who acted in concert with the military, and who carried out activities for the sake of Japanese who had settled in the colonies (Taiwan and Korea), as well as military proselytization.[2] In particular, it's been pointed out that the Ōtani and Honganji subdenominations of True Pure Land Buddhism established offices relating to wartime concerns within Japan from an early period, and they early on demonstrated a posture of "recompense to the nation."

When we examine the activities of the Ōtani subdenomination of True Pure Land Buddhism, what first calls our attention are the activities of the Pusan Branch Temple[3] at the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula. The Pusan Branch Temple was the earliest temple established for the purpose of colonial proselytization by the Ōtani subdenomination on the Korean Peninsula, and according to the organization's own testimony, it played an active part in cooperating in the wars against the Qing and Russia.[4]

Members of the Ōtani subdenomination testified proudly that they had cooperated in the wars and conducted activities to comfort the soldiers, as well as memorial rites for the war dead. Here appears a posture of "naïve" cooperation with the war, with no evidence of consideration or penitential reflection based on the Buddhist belief in "not killing sentient life."

Ultimately, the True Pure Land Ōtani and Honganji subdenominations, as well as the Pure Land denomination, dispatched chaplains in the first Sino-Japanese War. Along with the Sōtō denomination of Zen, these sent chaplains to Taiwan, which was acquired as a result of the war, and opened a path to further missionary work there. In the same way, at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, monks of various denominations set off for chaplaincy and comfort work, and with the support of the Japanese state, which had acquired control over the Korean peninsula, they pushed forward the "advance" of Japanese Buddhism onto the continent.

The axes of activity for chaplain monks in the war zones were twofold: sermons delivered to military personnel, and the conduct of memorial rites for the dead. Chaplains preached to soldiers that to pledge fidelity to the emperor while alive, and to die in a valiant and bold manner, were their duties as Buddhists. In this respect, it could be said that there was almost no difference according to denomination.[5]

With the advance into the second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War, Buddhist cooperation with the state was pushed to an extreme.[6] For instance, in 1938, the year after the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War, the "Buddhist Federation," an alliance of various denominations, resolved to disseminate widely to the citizenry the ideas of national unity and of offering up one's life for the nation. In 1944, the Federation's organization itself dissolved to join with Shintō, Christian, and other transreligious alliances into the "Greater Japan Wartime Patriotic Association of Religions." Of course, it gave sermons rationalizing wartime cooperation, and toward the war's end, at a time of lack of materials, temple bells and metal implements were taken as war materiel (even if this was in part coerced), without resistance.

What has become clear in the summary through this point is that Japanese Buddhism before 1945 truly was of one piece with imperialism and militarism. Needless to say, the missionary activities of Japanese Buddhism in the colonies aligned with the ambitions of the newly emergent empire, Japan. More precisely, we ought to say that Japanese Buddhism was excessively well adapted to imperialism. Japanese Buddhism was unable to achieve results comparable to those of the Christians from the Euroamerican powers, but it remains a fact that it did conduct colonial mission work, and acted in concert with the state and its military.

I should further like to point out one difference in intellectual tendency distinguishing this from the case of Christian colonial missionary work. This is a disposition imagined by persons with Buddhist connections, which we could call "Buddhist Asianism." The images of an Asia with

"Buddhism" as its common basis, and of a commonality mediated by that Buddhism, were taken favorably, probably as manifestations of affection for neighboring countries, but with the foregrounding of the "desire" limitlessly to absorb the "other" Asian Buddhisms under the guise of a general Buddhism, this overlapped with the "desires" of Imperial Japan, and in the end, the alterity of Asian Buddhisms went unacknowledged, and nothing more than the expression of an "Asian Buddhism," in cooperation with Japan, was used. Until Japan's defeat in the war, this disposition was often used by Buddhists to disguise their imperialist desires.

## ANTI-WAR AND PEACE MOVEMENTS BY BUDDHISTS IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

### Peace Movements in the Religious World Immediately after Defeat[7]

In Japan, after the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration and the beginning of Occupation, State Shintō was abolished, and various religious communities began to applaud "freedom of belief." The religious policy directions for GHQ were reputedly founded on two principles: "establishing the principle of freedom of belief," and "the elimination of militarism and extreme nationalism."[8] These manifestly appear in the "Shintō Directives" promulgated in December 1945. According to these directives, post-war Japan would have to sever completely the links between the state and Shintō, which was seen as having fanned extreme nationalism (also, on New Year Day, 1946, the emperor himself made his "declaration of humanity," which for the Shintō contingent also had the significance of negating the links with the citizenry as based on mythology); starting with Buddhism, all religions were freed from the domination of State Shintō. The origins of the "separation between rule and religion" established in the present Constitution of Japan may correctly be identified in the "Shintō Directives;" as a reaction to pre-war State Shintō, the Constitution has set an extremely rigorous benchmark, even by international standards. However, on the other hand, it's also undeniable that this "separation between rule and religion" promoted the depoliticization of various religious groups after the war.

The religious world, which had banded together during the war to serve the nation as the "Greater Japan Wartime Patriotic Association of Religions," took on a new appearance as an organization known as the "Japanese Association of Religious Organizations"[9] in June 1946, and in May 1947 sponsored the opening of the "All-Japan Conference for Religious Peace." At this conference, representatives conducted penitential reflection for being unable to stop the World War or to exemplify the central tenet of religion, which is based on peace. Here is an excerpt from one of these declarations of penitential reflection:

> "On the occasion of the opening of the All-Japan Conference for Religious Peace, we religionists[10] hereby announce our heartfelt sentiments of contrition and repentance.
>
> Although there is no religion that does not take peace as its central tenet, we are overwhelmed with shame toward the gods and Buddhas, toward our ancestral land, and toward all of global humanity, for being unable to stop the militarist tendencies after the Manchurian Incident of 1931, and for being sucked into the recent disastrous war. On present calm reflection, before such a devastating war broke out, we should have moved to uphold peace and we should have striven to embody the central tenet of religion, even at the risk of our own lives. On this point, we feel deep shame for our inaction and lack of the spirit of martyrdom. Now we must resolutely act to work to fulfill our duty as persons of religion.
>
> The new constitution has pledged to the world that Japan will renounce warfare, but the realization of this noble ideal, unheard of in the history of humanity, will stand only on the religious foundation of the reform of the human spirit. We will not merely issue apologies for our past actions to the world and apologize with our heads bowed to the victims of war on both sides; here, on the occasion of the opening of the All-Japan Conference for Religious Peace, we swear that we will offer ourselves vigorously for the building of a nation of peace."[11]

In this text, we find almost no penitential reflection with regard to active cooperation with war, but we could evaluate it as a declaration that Buddhism, Christianity, and Shintō will work together to reflect on war and to uphold the peace constitution.

Article Nine of the new Constitution of Japan, which had been promulgated in November 1946, held up the "renunciation of armaments and war," and this conference announced its support for this new constitution. The reason that various religions, including Shintō, Buddhism, and Christianity were able to issue a joint resolution lay in the fact that at the time, Article Nine of the Constitution was regarded as coinciding with the spirit of peace common to all religions; it was considered, we might say, that secular values based on the constitution agreed with religious ideals, and there was no apparent conflict or strained relationship between the "secular" and the "religious."[12]

When we turn our attention to the Buddhist community, we see that in April 1950, in Kyoto, a "Consultative Group of Religionists" was founded, and February 1951 in Tokyo, so was a "Consultative Group for Buddhist on Peace."[13] The core members of these groups were persons who had been active in the democratization movements within the various religious communities since immediately after the end of the war. These two groups were composed of persons who pioneered the peace movement within the world of post-war Japanese Buddhism. The "Peace Communiqué" issued

by the “Consultative Group for Buddhist on Peace” cites Buddhist teachings, which is to say, the precepts of “not killing,” “not stealing,” and “not lying,” and demonstrates a thoroughgoing opposition to war. A sense of crisis arising from the Korean War (1950–1953) and the Stockholm Appeal (1950), which called for the prohibition of atomic weapons, had an effect on the activities of these two groups. In June 1951, the “Council for Religionists’ Peace Movements” was formed, centered on Buddhism, Christianity, and Shintō; it aimed to align itself not only with the religious world, but also with the labor and women’s movements. However, roughly three months after the formation of this group, the Treaty of San Francisco and the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the US were signed; the Council, which had opposed the conclusion of both of these treaties, rapidly lost its unity, and it quickly lost its effectiveness as well. The actual period of operation for this group was extremely brief, but it deserves special mention for its prescience in declaring repentance early in the post-war period for the invasions of Japan’s Asian neighbors, with the words, “For the past half-century, the Japanese people unthinkingly swallowed Western imperialism and used force to invade their Asian neighbors; today, with a spirit of contrition toward our Asian brothers, we must use all our strength to prevent world war.”

With the outbreak of the Korean War, Japan, occupied by the General Headquarters of the Allied Powers (GHQ), advanced on what has been referred to as the “reverse course,” and along with the labor movement, the peace and anti-war movements were also suppressed. In spite of a constitution which chanted the praises of “the renunciation of armaments,” rearmament proceeded, and Japan was drawn into the Cold War order. Faced with this reality, the majority of the religious world came to proclaim the idea of “peace in one’s heart,” cut off from reality, and concrete activities geared down.

## THE ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT AND THE RELIGIOUS WORLD: THE PEACE MOVEMENT AS ACTIVISM

The trigger that reignited the peace movement in Japan after its independence was the hydrogen bomb test by America in the Bikini Atoll in March 1954. The suffering caused by the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki had by this time already been revealed widely to the citizenry (under the GHQ occupation, reports and publications concerning the atomic bombs had been restricted), and the bombing of Japanese fishing crews in the Bikini Atoll was received with shock in Japan, which has continued to identify itself as the “Only Country in the World to be Hit by Atomic Bombs.”[14] Rapidly, there spread a grassroots movement begun by housewives in Tokyo; by August 1954, the movement had gathered an amazing thirty million signatures opposing the hydrogen bomb. Further, on August

6, 1955, exactly a decade after the dropping of the first atomic bomb, the "First Worldwide Conference for the Prohibition of the Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs" was opened in Hiroshima, spearheaded by the "Japanese Coalition for the Prohibition of the Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs," an organization in which the Japanese religious world played a part. In 1958, with the exception of Catholicism and Shintō, the major religious bodies formed a "Consultative Group of Religionists for the Prohibition of the Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs," but in 1960, the organization fractured over the problem of revisions to the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the US, and was unable to maintain a meaningful presence.

However, in July 1961, the first World Conference of Religions for Peace was held (this is an organization separate from the WCRP that will be discussed later), gathering 269 participants from sixteen countries around the themes of "complete disarmament, abolition of atomic and hydrogen bombs, and nuclear disarmament." Japanese participants numbered 226, and came from Buddhism, Christianity, and Shintō; after the conference, representatives of the various religious communities, led by Buddhists, gathered together and formed the "Japanese Association of Religions for Peace." In its founding declaration was expressed repentance for Japan's previous invasions of Asian countries. This group later became a central organization in the demonstrations opposing the Vietnam War and in the anti-war and anti-nuclear movements. In other words, this Association was characterized by its taking political activism as an article of faith, and by not merely stressing "peace in the inner heart" through faith, but by advancing into concrete actions.[15]

Further, as may be seen in the founding declaration of this group, in the religious world of 1960s Japan, there was a growing number of declarations expressing contrition and critical self-reflection toward the colonies and occupied areas including Korea, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. In March 1967, the Protestant United Church of Christ in Japan also issued its "Confession of Responsibility During World War II," expressing its critical self-reflection concerning its cooperation with war, and its repentance toward the nations of Asia.

However, when we look toward the bulk of Buddhist denominations, we find that only a very few people were connected with peace movements of this type, and that they were seen as a peripheral presence. It was emphasized that "Buddhism not engage with social movements or politics," and this mentality became a reason for the continuing lack of expression of post-defeat "reflection concerning war cooperation" or "reflection concerning colonial domination."[16] To offer one concrete example: The author of *Zen at War*, Brian Victoria, was studying in 1970 in the graduate school at Komazawa University, which was founded by the Sōtō denomination of Zen. He has explained his experience of being chastised by the denominational leadership for his involvement in the movement to oppose the

Vietnam War.[17] From even this single incident, we can detect the lack of political interest and posture of detachment in the Buddhist denominations of that time.

## The Peace Movement Undertaken by New Religions Based in Buddhism: Risshō Kōseikai and Nipponzan Myōhōji

As I have explained, in the major denominations of Japanese Buddhism, only a small group of clerics was associated with the peace movement. By contrast, it was the new religions rooted in Buddhism which engaged in the peace movement on a congregational level. In what follows, I will introduce Risshō Kōseikai and Nipponzan Myōhōji, representative groups in this regard.

### *Risshō Kōseikai and Its Activities in WCRP*

Risshō Kōseikai is a new religion derived from the Nichiren denomination, founded in 1938 by Niwano Nikkyō (1906–1999) and Naganuma Myōkō (1889–1957). This religious community is a gathering of lay believers, who take the *Lotus Sūtra* as their fundamental scripture, and is also known for its high degree of interest in exchange with other religions and social action. After the end of the war, this group extended its reach during the period of high-speed economic growth in Japan, and in present-day Japan, it boasts of a membership second only to Sōka Gakkai's (according to statistics from 2005, some 4,720,000).

Let us now take a brief look back at Niwano Nikkyō's career as the founder of Risshō Kōseikai. Niwano was born and raised in the prefecture of Niigata, known as the Snow Country. His birth family was farmers, said to have a middling standard of living. His birth family seems not to have been such fervent believers, but before he became an adult, it is said that he made the following six resolutions: "From now on, I will never lie;" "I will work my hardest;" "I will gladly do that which others despise;" "I will not struggle with others, but no matter how terrible my lot, I will regard it as the will of the gods and Buddhas and endure it;" "When I do my job, I will work without double-dealing, whether others are watching me or not;" and "No matter how trifling the job, once I have undertaken it, I will do my best."[18] We could well say that here we have the sprouts of the ethics of tolerance and diligence that inform both Niwano and Risshō Kōseikai.

Niwano was inducted in 1926, and he was assigned to the Imperial Navy. This was the period in which both naval and army disarmament were proceeding in accordance with the 1922 Washington Naval Conference (the International Conference On Naval Limitation); only men seen as exceptionally capable were sent directly to the Navy on induction, and in this sense, these recruits were considered a kind of village elite. Niwano likely felt, just as did other young men, that his recruitment to the Navy

was an honor, and in fact, he reminisced about putting his three years of experience in the military to use later in his life. "Before I went to the military, I was living in Tokyo, but I hadn't attended school, and since I was a country boy from Niigata, I felt intense inferiority; but after I returned from the military, all of that went away," he said, and both before and after the way, he almost never made any pronouncements critical of the military itself.[19]

After Niwano was discharged, he married, moved to Tokyo with his wife, and worked his way through various occupations and various religions. When his second daughter was cured by Reiyūkai in 1935, he joined the group and became an extremely fervent believer. This was the occasion for Niwano's encounter with the *Lotus Sūtra*. With its esteem for the *Lotus Sūtra* and its basis in ancestral rites (one characteristic of this group is in the simultaneous veneration of both maternal and paternal lines), Reiyūkai rapidly increased its membership. However, Niwano came to have doubts about the administration of the group, and three years later, in 1938, he broke away from it together with Naganuma Myōkō to found the Dai Nippon Risshō Kōseikai. Naganuma was a woman with shamanistic tendencies, and Niwano took on the role of receiving and interpreting the oracles that issued from her. Risshō Kōseikai was founded in the period of the Second Sino-Japanese War and the entry into the Pacific War; although it did not actively oppose militarism, neither did it cooperate with it. Niwano later recalled that, because at the time it was still small in scale, it did not attract unwelcome attention from the government or the police, and that its esteem for the *Lotus Sūtra*, which had many devotees in the military, spared it suppression at the time. Although Risshō Kōseikai hid itself guardedly during the war, after the war, it experienced explosive growth, attracting the attention of society. Niwano constructed his teaching by merging his original quotidian ethics centered on diligence with his own understanding of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and his philosophy of peace could be called a combination of these two. He himself said of it:

> "I flatter myself by thinking myself a man of peace, but on calm, analytic consideration of the causes forming such a person, and leaving aside the question of inborn disposition, it seems to me that there are something like the following three factors and conditions. First, I spent my childhood and youth in the great outdoors. Second, the atmosphere in the home in which I grew up was cheerful and harmonious.... Third, there is the fact that I was able to encounter the *Lotus Sūtra*."[20]

Thus, Niwano stresses that the perspective on ethics and the philosophy of peace that he naturally acquired were reinforced by the *Lotus Sūtra*. This makes for a striking contrast with the penitential reflection upon the pre-1945 war cooperation by the peace movement of the established Buddhist denominations. What, then, was the worldview of the *Lotus Sūtra* as

Niwano interpreted it? Niwano briefly explains the worldview of the *Lotus Sūtra* as follows:

> "Everything that exists in this world has but one single invisible essence. This is the great life-force of the universe. Since everything in this world is a manifestation of this great life-force in various forms, all things are of one piece; therefore, although there may be numberless variation in their appearance as phenomena, they are essentially equal beings."[21]

This philosophy of equality, which may even be considered a kind of pantheism, has supported Risshō Kōseikai's later activities in social welfare.

During the 1960s, under the Cold War order, there existed a global trend toward interreligious dialogue. In this regard, we cannot overlook the Second Vatican Council (held 1962–1965). In fact, Niwano was among those called to the Council (September 1965), where he had an audience with Pope Paul VI, which he has said became a great motive in his pursuit of the development of inter-religious dialogue. Actually, before being invited to this Vatican Council, Niwano recalls, he had claimed on various occasions that Catholic self-righteousness was obstructing inter-religious cooperation, so that at first, he found it strange that he was invited.[22] When he attended the Council, he was impressed that the Vatican was displaying a more cooperative posture toward other religions than he had expected, and he himself handed a letter to the Pope to the effect that "in order to resist the East-West Cold War and materialism, religionists must join together."[23]

With this background, the National Inter-Religious Conference on Peace was held in Washington, D.C., America, in 1966; on this occasion, it was proposed that there be a peace conference composed of representatives from the world's religions. On this account, the World Conference on Religion and Peace,[24] an international organization dedicated to interreligious dialogue and religious cooperation, was formed, and its first general conference was held in October 1970 in Kyoto.

During this first general conference, religious leaders from thirty-nine countries visited Japan, including the Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, the proponent of "engaged Buddhism" who was at that time in exile in Paris. This general meeting included sessions on "disarmament," "development," and "human rights," and a resolution demanding America's immediate military withdrawal from Vietnam was adopted. With regard to the intent behind this first WCRP, Niwano spoke as follows:

> "Peace is not simply a condition in which there is no war. Only when we have eliminated from the earth suffering from poverty and starvation, and suffering from the suppression of one's basic freedoms as a human being, will peace come to humanity: Adopting this outlook, this conference took as its three themes 'disarmament,' 'development,' and 'human rights.'"[25]

Niwano emphasizes "compassion" and "the abandonment of desire" as Buddhist teachings that support his philosophy of peace. We could say that Risshō Kōseikai's special character lies in the fact that it does not merely stress a philosophical idealism of "changing one's mind," but that it has consciously tried to link its concrete peace activism and fundraising with its teaching as an organization.

It was decided that activities would be ongoing, and the WCRP set up an international office, still active at the present, in the Church Center for the United Nations in New York. The most recent general meeting of the group (the eighth), in 2006, was again held in Kyoto. The WCRP is a transdenominational international organ, but in Japan, its activities have been consistently supported by Risshō Kōseikai, and its Japan Committee is located within the Risshō Kōseikai headquarters. Compared with the activism of the Japanese Association of Religions for Peace, as introduced in the previous section, the WCRP has been mild and conservative in its movement, but it has far exceeded the scope of so-called "conservativism" in Japan, and has exerted a great influence on the religious sphere in Japan.[26]

### *Nipponzan Myōhōji and Its Peace Movements*

Meanwhile, Nipponzan Myōhōji[27] is a new Buddhist movement founded by Fujii Nittatsu (or Nichidatsu, 1885–1985), and is also a religious community stemming from the Nichiren denomination. It is an extremely small, monastic-centered community (as of 2005, there were 133 monastics, with no statistics on the number of lay believers), but its contribution to the peace movement in Japan has been tremendous. Here, I offer a concise introduction to Fujii Nittatsu's career.[28]

Fujii was born a farmer's son in the prefecture of Kumamoto in 1885. His family are said to have been longstanding believers in True Pure Land Buddhism, with his grandmother a particularly devout believer. Influenced by that grandmother during his childhood, Fujii naturally became interested in Buddhism, and he later recalled enjoying going to temples to hear Dharma talks as a boy. Fujii also had a strong if naïve sentiment of reverence for the Emperor, which never changed throughout his life. In addition to the True Pure Land denomination that was his household faith, he also enjoyed hearing talks in other denominations, and after he graduated from agricultural school, and in defiance of the objections of his family, he was ultimately ordained as a monk of the Nichiren denomination (later, by curing his mother's illness through prayer, he converted his entire family to the Nichiren denomination). He advanced immediately to the Nichiren University (present-day Risshō University) which had just been founded, and after graduating, he studied the teachings of other denominations in Kyoto and Nara. Even though he belonged to the Nichiren denomination, which has a strong tendency to deny other denominations, we may infer that Fujii's personality, and his interest in learning from other denominations, formed

the basis for his later inter-religious cooperation and peace activism. However, Fujii came to think that even his scholarship was not accomplishing the basic mission of Buddhism, the "guidance of all sentient beings," and he said that as the result of receiving a dream prophecy of "age thirty-three," he resolved to pursue ascetic practices and not to proselytize until reaching that age.[29] Further, Fujii revered Nichiren's disciple Nichiji (1250–?), who was reputed to have crossed over to the Asian continent to spread the teachings, and Fujii said that he conceived of following in his footsteps and proselytizing on the continent. In Nichiren's "Remonstration with the Bodhisattva Hachiman" (*Kangyō Hachiman shō*諫暁八幡鈔),[30] there is a prophecy that Japan's Buddhism would return without fail to India; based on that prophecy, Fujii planned to head for India eventually.[31]

Immediately after Fujii took monastic vows, he resolved to spread the teaching to lands in Asia, including China and India; he crossed to the North-eastern region of China known as "Manchuria" before the Second World War, and in 1918 established the temple Nipponzan Myōhōji in Liaoyang. Given his later record, it is something of an irony that his youthful activities paralleled those of Japanese imperialism. He was, if nothing else, truly one practitioner of "Buddhist Asianism." Fujii spoke of the Japanese Buddhism on the continent in that day as follows:

> "Although there were temples, these were nothing more than places for funerals, and all that the Honganji and other large religious organizations did in Manchuria was funeral ceremonies. The South Manchurian Railway Company [the key Japanese instrument of rule in semi-colonial Manchuria] built vast temple structures in its compounds, but there was nothing special about these. I thoughts that with that mode of action, the Buddhism of Japan would have no connection with the people of Manchuria, that they were utterly disconnected, and that, with the way things were going, Manchuria could never be at peace in the future."[32]

Thus, Fujii criticized the religious organizations that had developed mainly to offer funerals to Japanese immigrants. After he began to walk his own path, he is reported to have been out of favor with the Nichiren denominational headquarters and to have faced various obstacles.

Fujii later continued to erect temples throughout Japan and the Asian continent, and in 1935 he became close to Mahatma Gandhi, by whom he was greatly influenced. Before 1945, the Japanese military, noting his personal connections on the continent, demanded his cooperation. However, Fujii claimed after the war that he had not blindly followed the military:

> "After the war, monks of Nipponzan Myōhōji faced criticism for cooperating with the military, but this is slander from people who don't know the truth. It is true that we traveled with the military to the

battlefields, but we were constantly at odds with the military to the bitter end."[33]

"I heard that the military staff headquarters had various policies, which were finally to eventuate in the conquest of India by force. They tried to use us in pacification operations toward that end. As you could imagine, I really couldn't agree with that basic policy of the military."[34]

Fujii and his followers seem at first glance to have cooperated with the military, but at least subjectively, they claim to have followed in order to admonish the military in the interest of peace in Asia.

Fujii saw the horrors of war firsthand, and after the war, he unwaveringly proclaimed "no war," "nonviolence," "peace without armament," "prohibition of the atomic and hydrogen bombs," and so forth, often participating in demonstrations along with area residents. It is also uniquely characteristic of Nipponzan Myōhōji that for its concrete activities, it has built Buddhist reliquary stupas not only in Japan but also all over the world. As reasons for emphasizing the relics of the Buddha, Fujii explained that "in the *Lotus Sūtra*, we are told that we should venerate them with care,"[35] and that "my emphasis on venerating and praying before Buddha relics is another way of overcoming divisions among Buddhist denominations, and of returning to Śākyamuni, who is the core of Buddhist unity."[36] In addition, the monks of Myōhōji frequently engage in anti-war and anti-nuclear demonstrations and hunger strikes with their distinctive style of chanting the title of the *Lotus Sūtra* while beating drums. Nipponzan Myōhōji has attracted attention because it has continued to exemplify a position of "engaged Buddhism" exceptional among Japanese Buddhist groups. Even today, the disciples who inherited Fujii's teachings continue to pray for world peace, and to head into conflict zones throughout the world.

To sum up the distinguishing characteristics of the activities of these two religious communities, we could say the following. Compared with established Buddhist denominations, which have branch temples throughout Japan, and which on account of their own sheer size have been unable to respond rapidly to social situations, we could suggest that the communities of the new religions have had the advantages of command structures unified by the charisma of the founder, and therefore of being able to undertake large-scale activities in a short span of time. Without such founders' charisma, it would be difficult to imagine the participation of Risshō Kōseikai in the WCRP, or the peace activities of Nipponzan Myōhōji.

We have, in other words, a situation in Japan in which it is not the established Buddhist denominations, but rather new religions based in Buddhism, which have taken the lead in engaged Buddhism.[37]

## IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION

Earlier, I have in rapid succession introduced the cooperation of Japanese Buddhism with war before 1945, as well as the course of its post-war peace movements. To sum up the post-war Buddhist peace movement: From early on in the post-war era, there certainly have been clerics who have attempted to advance the peace movement in a trans-denominational way, but they were merely peripheral presences within their denominations, and were unable to initiate movements that drew in the whole of their denominations; critical self-reflection on Buddhist war cooperation and contribution to the invasions of Asia has simply not been disseminated. This is likely because for many monastics, there predominates a sense of being a "victim, who was used and abused by the state." This sense has given pride of place to memories of the atomic bomb and the wartime air raids, and holds of Japanese in general, who have been unable to understand themselves as aggressors. In other words, the memories of war have always tended to be reduced to national memories, and to face inward. We could point out as one characteristic of the peace movements by Japanese religionists that apart from their religious faith, they uphold Article Nine of the Constitution of Japan, which forbids warfare with other nations. In one sense, this is the only ideal that they share, without respect for religion or denomination.

When we look back on the path trodden by post-war Japan, we cannot overlook the fact that it was through the special demand brought on by the Korean and Vietnam Wars that economic recovery was carried out. Further, there is Okinawa, which even after the war ended was occupied for decades by America, and used as a forward base in the Vietnam War. It was not until the late 1960s and the early 1970s that there finally sprouted a consciousness that Japan's prosperity was built through sacrificing surrounding regions and countries.[38] As one example of this, we can adduce the "Travel for Repentance to Southeast Asia" begun in 1974 by the youth organization of the Union of New Religious Organizations of Japan (abbreviated in Japanese to "Shinshūren"). The 1970s were a period of Japan's economic advance into Southeast Asia, and an era of high anti-Japanese feeling. The young members, who would later go on to head the various new religions, travelled through Southeast Asia and confronted their identities as "aggressors," an experience that would lead to further peace movements. The ability of believers in new religions to surpass most Japanese in having this consciousness might also derive from the facts that many of their communities were suppressed before 1945, and that they did not have as cooperative a relationship to the war effort as the Buddhist denominations.[39] In addition to these actions by the new religions, members of the Buddhist denominations and Buddhist umbrella organizations have also traveled to such places as Southeast Asia and China, regions which were once invaded by Japan, and performed memorial rites not just for the Japanese dead, but also for the dead from that area.

Over the past twenty or so years, the denominations of Japanese Buddhism have finally expressed critical self-reflection for their cooperation in the war before 1945, and their collusion in colonial domination. As I mentioned previously, the tardiness of these declarations of penitential reflection stems from the strength of the self-perception among Buddhist denominations that they were themselves victims, and from the lack of consciousness that the peaceful state of post-war Japan arose on the basis of the sacrifices of the former colonies. We could also say that the self-perception of Japan as having a peace constitution has brought about a kind of "ease" or "conceit" that "from now on, we will never involve ourselves in war." They are, further, in the process of rehabilitating those clerics who were expelled from their denominations before 1945, for the "offense" of having "rebelled against the state." In this sense, we could say that the postcolonial situation in Japanese Buddhism has only just begun.

## NOTES

1. [The English expression "Mikado worship" derives from a pamphlet published by Basil Hall Chamberlain, *The Invention of a New Religion*, in 1912. The full original text is available online via Project Gutenberg. See http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2510/2510-h/2510-h.htm. Trans.]
2. See KIBA Akeshi, "Meiji-ki taigai sensō ni tai suru Bukkyō no yakuwari: Shinshū ryō Honganji-ha o rei to shite," in *Ronshū Nihon Bukkyō-shi: 8 Meiji jidai*, edited by Ikeda Eishun (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1987).
3. [*Betsuin*, translated here as "branch temple," is literally a "detached temple," a high-ranking institution with a relatively high degree of autonomy within a Buddhist denomination. Trans.]
4. Chōsen Kaikyō Kantokubu, ed., *Chōsen kaikyō gojūnen shi* (Keijō: Ōtaniha Honganji Chōsen Kaikyō Kantokubu, 1927), 167.
5. For instance, concerning the connections between Sōtō Zen and war, there are the following: Victoria, Daizen, *Zen at War* (New York: Weatherhill, 1997), and Eizawa Kōji, *Kindai Nihon no Bukkyōka to Sensō* (Tokyo: Senshū Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 2002).
6. For an overview of the wartime cooperation by Buddhism, see Kashiwahara Yūsen, *Nihon Bukkyō shi: Kindai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1990), 241–250.
7. For an overview of the religious situation in Japan after 1945, see Shimazono Susumu, "Sōsetsu: Shūkyō no sengo taisei: Zenshin suru shutai, wagō ni yoru heiwa," in Komori Yōichi, ed., *Iwanami kōza Kindai Nihon no bunkashi,* Vol. 10 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003).
8. Woodard, William P., *The Allied Occupation of Japan 1945–1952 and Japanese Religions*, (Leide: E.J. Brill, 1972), 14–16.
9. This is a corporate body still in existence. Its official site is at http://www.jaoro.or.jp/, and it is currently composed of five bodies: (1) the Confederation of Sect Shintō, (2) the Japan Buddhist Federation, (3) the Japan Confederation of Christian Churches, (4) the Association of Shinto Shrines, and (5) the Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan.
10. [Although it is admittedly an uncommon word, I have selected the English *religionist* to translate the very common Japanese *shūkyōsha* 宗教者. I use *religionist* in the sense of "a person professionally occupied with religion,

as a minister or preacher," as it is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). This seemed preferable to the English noun *religious*, in its *OED* sense of "people bound by monastic vows or devoted to a religious life," with its strongly Catholic connotation. Trans.]

11. Nihon Shūkyōsha Heiwa Kyōgigikai, ed., *Shūkyōsha no sensō sekinin zange/kokuhaku shiryōshū* (Tokyo: Shiraishi Shoten, 1994), 3.
12. Morishita Tōru, "Sengo shūkyōsha heiwa undō no shuppatsu," *Ritsumeikan Daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo kiyō*, Vol. 82 (2003), 136–139.
13. Nakanō Kyōtoku, *Gendai ni ikiru Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Shiraishi Shoten, 1984), 67–69.
14. [Here I adopt Norma Field's translation for the well-known Japanese phrase *yuiitsu no hibakukoku* 唯一の被爆国. See her *By My Grandmother's Bedside: Sketches of Postwar Tokyo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 23. Trans.]
15. Ōtani Eiichi, "Sengo Nihon no shūkyōsha no heiwa undō," in *Shūkyō to gendai ga wakaru hon 2008*, ed. Watanabe Naoki (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2008), 230.
16. Almost all of the main Japanese Buddhist denominations to issue official statements of self-criticism regarding war cooperation did so from the 1980s into the 1990s. See Nihon Shūkyōsha Heiwa Kyōgigikai, ed., ibid.
17. Victoria, ibid., 11.
18. Niwano Nikkyō, *Mugen heno Tabi* (Tokyo: Tōjusha, 1963), 55.
19. Risshō Kōseikai/Kyōdanshi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Risshō Kōseikai Shi*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kōsei Shuppansha, 1983), 48.
20. Niwano Nikkyō, *Heiwa heno Michi* (Tokyo: Kōsei Shuppansha, 1972), 111–112.
21. Niwano Nikkyō, *Niwano Nikkyō Hōwa Senshū Vol. 6* (Tokyo: Kōsei Shuppansha, 1979), 186.
22. Nukaga Akitomo, ed., *WCRP Sekai Shūkyōsha Heiwa Kyōgi 30-nen shi* (Tokyo: Zaidan Hōjin Sekai Shūkyōsha Heiwa Kyōgi Nihon Iinkai, 2000), 103.
23. Nukaga Akitomo, ed., ibid., 106–107.
24. Concerning the activities of the WCRP, see Homer A. Jack, *WCRP: A History of the World Conference on Religion and Peace* (World Conference on Religion and Peace, 1993), and Nukaga Akitomo, ed., ibid. The official WCRP site is at http://www.wcrp.org; the Japanese committee's at http://www.wcrp.or.jp.
25. Niwano Nikkyō, *Heiwa heno Michi*, 255.
26. Nakajima Michio, "Sensō to Nihonjin," in Asao Naohiro et al., ed., *Iwanami kōza: Nihon tsūshi*, Vol. 20 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 250.
27. The official name is "The Great Sangha, Nipponzan Myōhōji." Its official site is at <http://www.nipponzanmyohoji.org>.
28. As Fujii's autobiography, see Yamaori Tetsuo, ed., *Waga Hibōryoku: Fujii Nittatsu Jiden*, (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1992). Fujii Nichidatsu, *My Non-violence: Autobiography of a Japanese Buddhist* (Tokyo: Japan-Buddha Sanga Press, 1975) .
29. Yamaori Tetsuo, ed., ibid., 32.
30. [For a translation of Nichiren's "Remonstration," see Jay Sakashita, ed., *Writings of Nichiren Shōnin: Doctrine 1*, trans. Kyotsu Hori (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 257–280. Trans.]
31. Yamaori Tetsuo, ed., ibid., 121.
32. Yamaori Tetsuo, ed., ibid., 74.
33. Yamaori Tetsuo, ed., ibid., 165.
34. Yamaori Tetsuo, ed., ibid., 172.

35. Yamaori Tetsuo, ed., ibid., 149.
36. Yamaori Tetsuo, ed., ibid., 182.
37. See the following books for information about social activism and peace movements in Japan's New Religions: Mukhopadhiyaya, Ranjana, *Nihon no shakai sanka gata Bukkyō: Hōonji to Risshō Kōseikai no shakai katsudō to shakai rinri* (Tokyo: Tōshindō, 2005); Kisala, Robert, *Shūkyōteki heiwa shisō no kenkyū: Nihon shinshūkyō no oshie to jissen* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1997).
38. John W. Dower, "Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict," in Andrew Gordon, ed., *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
39. Nakajima, ibid., 253–263.

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# 11 Violent Buddhism

## Korean Buddhists and the Pacific War, 1937–1945

*Vladimir Tikhonov*

## KOREAN BUDDHISM AND ITS "COLONIAL BARGAIN"

### The Construction of the Colonial-Time Buddhism

The colonial-time Korean Buddhism used to be tightly controlled by the Japanese administration. While the relationship was hardly voluntary, it cannot be said to have been entirely unprofitable for the institutional Buddhism in Korea. The Japanese administration allowed considerable leeway for both economical and ecumenical activities of the Buddhist temples while strictly controlling them administratively and politically. The Temple Law (*Sach'allyŏng*), promulgated by the colonial Government-General on September 1, 1911, designated the thirty bigger and well-known temples (one more was added in 1924, and the final number was thus thirty-one)—generally, but not always, recognized already in the Chosŏn times as the local Buddhist centres—as the "head temples" (*ponsa*). They were given the right to select their own abbots—to be, of course, confirmed in their positions by the Japanese colonial authorities—as well as broad jurisdiction over the smaller "branch temples" attached to them, the right to conduct missionary work, and most importantly, the right to the protection of their lands and other monastic property. The other part of the bargain was, however, the high degree of the administrative controls to be exercised by the Japanese authorities over the temples. All the commercial deals with the monastic property—for which the abbots, in contrast to the more democratic traditional system, no longer required the consent of the whole monastic community expressed at a general meeting (*sangjung kongsa*)—were subject to the approval by the all-penetrating colonial authorities, and the act of "talking politics" could lead to the permanent expulsion from the monastic ranks (*ch'et'al toch'ŏp*). While being provided fairly beneficial conditions for participating in the colonial "religious market"—and for purely economical market activities as well—the monks were placed under the conditions which made it extremely difficult for them to participate in the formation and realization of the anti-colonial nationalist discourse.[1]

Whether they themselves were interested in exploring the discursive field of the anti-colonial nationalism was another question. From the viewpoint of more conservative "head temple" abbots—as well as many mainstream Buddhist intellectuals, whose ability to edit, publish, and write for the Buddhist periodicals directly depended on the donations from the richer temples—the Temple Law was an act of the "external protection for Buddha's Dharma," which provided the Buddhists with a "fairer playing ground" in the field of the proselytizing competition, especially against Christians. This law was praised, for example, by Yi Nŭnghwa (1869–1943), a Buddhist intellectual of encyclopaedic knowledge, who gathered in his all-inclusive *Chosŏn Pulgyo T'ongsa* (*The Outline History of the Korean Buddhism*, 1918) dozens of the Government-General documents clarifying the rules of monastic ordination, teacher-pupil succession, protection of the Buddhist relics, etc.[2] The main organ through which the "head temple" abbots were allowed to negotiate with the colonial authorities was the "Joint Office of the Thirty Head Temples" (*Samsip ponsak yŏnhap samuso*) established in the colonial Korean capital, Kyŏngsŏng (Seoul) in 1915, at the initiative of Kang Taeryŏn (1875–1942), the abbot of Yongjusa (Suwŏn) and one of the most influential personalities in the world of the colonial Buddhism.

While the "Joint office" was certainly constrained by the unceasing "supervision" by the Government-General, it still was allowed to run the Central Buddhist School (Chungang Hangnim), constantly widen the network of the missionary stations (*p'ogyoso*), and address the colonial rulers of Korea with the memorials articulating the wishes of the monastic elite. One of such memorials submitted by Kang Taeryŏn himself in 1920, asked the Japanese masters of the Peninsula to allow the Korean monks to marry, eat meat, establish a central, pan-Korean organ of leadership for the Buddhist community, subsidize it, and permit the monks to bequeath their private property to their disciples.[3] In a word, the conservatives were more interested in freeing themselves from the old disciplinary traditions, maximizing their negotiating potential vis-à-vis their colonial masters by establishing a unified pan-Korean leadership, and improving their economic opportunities than engaging in the anti-colonial resistance.

In the issue of the unified leadership, the conservatives actually managed to gain the upper hand: the "Central Korean Office of the Buddhist Religious Affairs" (*Chosŏn Pulgyo Chung'ang Kyomuwŏn*) they established on May 29, 1922, as a legal entity with solid initial capital amounting to 621.795 yen, was rich and strong enough to merge in 1924, with the administrative support of the Government-General, a rival progressive pan-Korean Buddhist organization sponsored by only three "head temples."[4] Publishing the Buddhist monthly, *Pulgyo*, and continuously running the Central Buddhist School, the "Central Office"—renamed into *Chogye Hag'wŏn* in 1942 and thus becoming the direct predecessor of today's biggest Buddhist denomination of South Korea, Chogye Order—was able, to a degree, to lobby the Japanese administration on behalf of the Buddhist community. In return,

however, it had to constantly demonstrate its loyalty to its imperial "protectors," and strongly identify with their ideology and interests.

This Faustian bargain, which improved the socio-economic position of the colonial-time Buddhism but left it without recognizable nationalist credentials, was contested by relatively small and powerless dissident fraction, inspired by nationalist zeal and indignant at the corruption of the Buddhist establishment. While there were only two Buddhists among the thirty-three "national representatives" whose historical "Korean Independence Declaration" sparked the watershed March 1, 1919, mass anti-Japanese demonstrations in Korea, one of them, Han Yong'un (1879–1944), was critically instrumental in preparing the event, printing the declaration, and mobilizing the Central Buddhist School students for distributing it and organizing the demonstrations.[5] These students initiated next year the organization of the reformist Korean Buddhist Youth League (*Han'guk Pulgyo Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe*) which aimed both at the general "modernization" of the colonial Buddhism (establishment of a central Buddhist press, primary schools and kindergartens, remaking the Central Buddhist School into a college, rationalization of the rituals, centralized management of the temple finances all over the country, etc.) and specifically at the abolishment of the Temple Law and democratization of the temple life.

The Buddhist Youth League activists further organized themselves into the Korean Buddhist Reformation Society (*Han'guk Pulgyo Yusinhoe*, established on December 13, 1921), which explicitly targeted the Temple Law and the system of the colonial "administrative guidance" over the Buddhist affairs in general as violating the Article 28 of Japan's own 1889 Meiji Constitution separating religion from the politics. This attempt to express the nationalist resentment over the colonial meddling into the Buddhist affairs through the legal language of the colonial public sphere was unsuccessful, the progressives constantly lacking money even to run the schools (among them the famed Posŏng School, the predecessor of today's Koryŏ University in Seoul) they controlled.[6] Some of the Youth League members, disappointed with the obvious fruitlessness of the legal Buddhist reformist movement, built up an underground Swastika Party (*Mandang*) in 1930, taking the "separation of the [Buddhist] religion from the [colonial] politics" and "popularization of Buddhism" as their main slogans. By 1933, however, the Swastika Party "comrades" became entangled in the squabbles of the regionally based cliques inside the Buddhist establishment and completely lost the ability to coordinated action; and in 1937–1938, many of them were arrested by the colonial police.[7] The progressive opposition against the collusive ties between the monastic elite and the colonial rulers proved to be too weak, too divided, and too easily co-opted by the Buddhist establishment it so zealously criticized.

Of course, even if the oppositional minority inside the colonial-time Buddhist establishment did not succeed in realizing its demands, it still managed to leave important intellectual legacy. Younger Buddhist intellectuals heavily

influenced by Han Yong'un—such as French-educated Kim Pŏmnin (1899–1964) or German-educated Paek Sŏng'uk (1897–1981)—played a significant role in developing Buddhist modernity as a discourse, fully utilizing the achievements of the contemporaneous religious studies, sociology, and other disciplinary fields in Europe. For example, in a seminal article on "mass-centred" Buddhism, Kim Pŏmnin—using the Durkheimian approach towards the religion as a social phenomenon—diagnosed the utter failure of Korean Buddhism as a modern religion. He saw the contemporary Korean Buddhism as predominantly "a religion of elderly uneducated women engaged in prayers for good luck," and accused it of having failed to make itself more relevant for both less educated commoners, who could not understand the literary Chinese of the canonical texts and the new intelligentsia to which the Buddhist tenets needed to be presented in much more "modern" way.[8] In another article, Kim Pŏmnin envisioned the rural missionary stations as general educational and social centres which would be able to intervene into the social conflicts in the countryside (tenancy disputes, etc.) and gradually reform the "pray for luck-centred folk Buddhism" of the Korean villages into more modern, doctrinal, and individual ethic-based faith.[9] On a similar note, Paek Sŏng'uk emphasized the importance of formal, modern educational credentials ("on a college level or higher") for remaking monks and nuns into the intellectual and religious leaders of Korea as a whole, and stressed also the significance of the autonomous lay folk associations for any successful missionary enterprise. New Korean Buddhism Paek Sŏng'uk dream of was a denomination where meditation halls were to be equipped with modern libraries and nunneries were to run Buddhist kindergartens.[10] Perhaps somewhat utopically—given the actual conditions of Korean Buddhism—the oppositional Buddhist intellectuals like Kim or Paek wanted their denomination to reinvent itself into a modernist enlightenment vehicle for the lower classes and a modernized, ethics, and idealist doctrine-centred creed for the intellectuals.

However, as both Kim and Paek were themselves painfully aware, the continuous commercial exploitation of the "pray for luck-centred folk Buddhism" was too easy and lucrative choice for the mainstream monastic Buddhism to be stimulated towards any significant changes. After all, the "cordial" ties between the Buddhist monastic elite and the Japanese administrative ensured rather privileged position of the institutional Buddhism in this niche sector of the religious marketplace. It is not, of course, that the colonial state did not similarly succeed—by force, persuasion, and guarantees of "freedom inside the framework of law" for "purely religious activities"—in securing cooperation of other larger institutionalized religions, prominently Catholic and Protestant Christians. However, the Christians, and especially Protestants, were easily suspected of potential disloyalty or "double loyalty," on account of their ties with foreign missionaries, active participation in the various nationalist causes both before and after the colonization and strained relations with the obligatory Shinto shrine worship, the "state religion" of sorts (although it was officially called

"civic duty") of the Japanese Empire.[11] With Buddhism, neither compatibility with state Shinto nor possibly "unhealthy" influences from outside the Empire were the questions.

The institutional Buddhism was actively participating in the official propagandist campaigns from mid-1930s—being obviously pressurized by the colonial authorities, but also keenly aware about the profitability of acting as a medium of the ideological indoctrination. By that point, the Buddhist establishment identified itself with its imperial "protectors" to a degree which actually made more or less unnecessary the use or even show of the force to secure its collaboration. A campaign for the "development of the heart field" (*simjŏn kaebal*) in 1935–1937, which aimed at making Koreans more loyal to Japan's "national polity" and was in many ways an important prelude to the all-out assimilation campaign which began in 1937, saw hundreds of Buddhist monks, nuns, and missionaries (*p'ogyosa*) mobilized for long lecture tours. The listeners were local residents, often "invited" by the colonial administrators to the refurbished local temples and missionary stations, youth, and female organization members. The numbers of the people, who were treated to the Buddhist-style praises for Japan's "unrivalled national polity" in such a way, was quite high—in relatively underpopulated Kangwŏn Province only, sixty-two days of lecture tours in 1936 attracted 11,869 men and women—mostly peasants who otherwise might not have been influenced by colonizers' propaganda in any efficient way.[12]

The Buddhist intellectuals mobilized for the campaign were also given access to the most advanced media of the 1930s, namely the radio. Kyŏngsŏng Broadcasting Station ran a program series on the "development of the heart field" sixteen times between April 7 and September 17, 1935. Well-known Buddhist experts, including the abbots of some major temples and the teachers of the Central Buddhist School, were invited to preach on the importance of the reverence towards the ancestors for developing the respect towards the Japanese Shinto gods and worshipping attitude towards the Emperor, and on the significance of the sentiment of thankfulness—of course, primarily to the Empire and its rulers.[13] Buddhist doctrines were blended with the Confucian moralizing and Shinto tenets into a mixture which was supposed to help to inculcate Imperial Japan's official ideology into the minds of the Koreans, still largely influenced by the Confucian ethics. These campaigns were also obviously profiting the Buddhists by increasing their local and national visibility and boosting their own missionary efforts—but simultaneously, they were also preparing them to further cooperation with the colonial authorities during the imminent full-scale war against China, and, further, against America and its allies.

## Buddhist Rituals as Part of the War Efforts

The wartime "patriotic service" by Korea's institutional Buddhism—prescribed, of course, by the colonial state and thus hardly to be seen as

"voluntary," but accepted with apparent willingness, and with very few known instances of refusal—comprised several distinct types of "patriotic activities." First and foremost, the monks and nuns were supposed to host the "prayer meetings for the benefit and the military fortunes and enhancement of state's greatness" (*kug'wi sŏnyang muun changgu kiwŏn*). All the thirty-one "head temples" were supposed to hold these prayer assemblies on July 25, just eighteen days after the all-out war against China started. Then, all the 1306 "branch temples" were to follow suit on August 5. The prayers were to be held at 5:00 in the morning by the whole seven thousand people-strong monastic communities simultaneously across the whole country. Then, both the prayers for "military fortunes" and the collective funeral prayers (*wiryŏngje*) for the soldiers sacrificed for their sake were to be held regularly.

The prayers often held by small, isolated missionary stations—for example, Paeg'yangsa's missionary station at village called Sam'yangni on Cheju Island had a war-related prayer session on December 4, 1937, while Hwaŏmsa's missionary station on the same island followed the suit on December 15, 1937—were to convey the "patriotic" zeal, in a pious religious form, to the members of local communities. At the same time, since the news on such sessions were to be announced by central newspapers, an impression of pan-national Buddhist wave of "patriotic sentiment" was to be created. In early 1940s, some prayers were held together by Buddhists, Christians and Shintoists, in a show of "patriotic religious unity." One such prayer was conducted on February 1, 1942, in Korea's main Shinto shrine on Namsan Mt. in the colonial capital of Kyŏngsŏng (Seoul). While from early 1942 all the victory prayers were to follow a standard form ("We pray (. . . . ) for the victory of loyal and righteous troops of our Empire, in air, on earth and in the oceans, and for the surrender of the enemies to our banner of justice (. . . . )") some of them were traditional in style. In famous Kapsa (Southern Ch'ungch'ŏng Province), the whole of *Avatamsaka-sūtra* was preached for 21 days in January 1942, in order to "comfort the fallen Imperial soldiers."

Then, every temple and missionary station were to collect both "donations for the national defence" (*kukpang hŏn'gŭm*) and the money for "comforting" parcels and gifts to the soldiers and officers on the frontline (*wimun'gŭm*). By April 1, 1938, a solid sum of 20.499 yen was collected, usually by monks who were supposed to "induce" the local lay folk to make donations. Some prominent, mostly Japan-educated monks fluent in Japanese and accompanied by musicians, singers, and literary figures, were sent on "comforting visits" to the China-based units—trio of Yi Tongsŏk (1887–1975), Ch'oe Pŏmsul (1904–1979), and Pak Yunjin (1905—?), for example, accompanied by acknowledged singer Hyŏn Chemyŏng (1902–1960), visited the Japanese positions in Northern China in December 1937–January 1938. Then, most ominously, the Buddhist establishment already in 1940 was actively encouraging the young monks to join the Japanese

army voluntarily. As soon as the Koreans started to be forcibly conscripted in 1943, the Buddhist media went out of their way persuading their audience that killing and dying for the "imperial cause" is a crucially important element of the Buddhist religious life.[14]

All in all, in ten years, from 1935 to 1945, the Buddhist establishment of Korean practiced the closest possible collaboration with the authorities, large part of it being devoted to mobilizing the reluctant and sceptical population to colonizers' war efforts. In the course of such a collaboration, war-related activities—from victory prayers and the prayers for the fallen soldiers to Buddhist "assistance" in conscripting the Korean youth—became an integral part of the Buddhist routine, both ritual and administrative. The next part will deal with the legitimization in the Buddhist establishment for such activities—the Buddhist discourse on "sacred war."

## BUDDHIST DISCOURSE OF THE "SACRED WAR"

### Attempts in Criticism

The criticism of the militaristic totalitarianism was not totally absent in the Korean Buddhist discourse of the mid-1930s. The most representative progressive Buddhist thinker, Han Yong'un, published in May 1938 in monthly *Pulgyo* (*Buddhism*), he himself edited a deeply critical review of the German fascist religious policy. Basically, he understood this policy as aimed at infusing "almighty ethnic nationalism" into all the existing religious confessions, while completely blocking any opportunity for them to wield an independent political influence. The pro-Nazi "German Christian Church," according to Han, hardly could unite the German Christian majority, which tended to cling to more traditional Christian beliefs. It meant, Han predicted, that the fascist state would have to continue to apply pressure onto the churches outside of the "German Christian Church," while also trying to reconcile them with the completely Nazified "German Christians."

However, in Han's judgment, Christianity as such was hardly suited to become a pillar of the Nazi ideological policy. This role was rather supposed to be played by Nazism's own "religion"—and to understand what it amounted to, Han cited in great length from the writings by Nazi's official religious philosopher Ernst Bergmann (1881–1945), especially his *Die 25 Thesen der Deutschreligion*.[15] Han continued to report on the Nazi state interference with the churches and the foreign criticisms against Nazi church policies in his current affairs column, "Sanjang ch'onmuk" ("A Drop of Ink from a Mountain Cottage") in June and July 1938 issues of *Pulgyo*.[16] In the August 1938 issue, he drew a parallel between the Bolshevik criticisms of the Church as an "anti-proletarian ruling class tool" and the ultra-nationalist attacks on the Church as "anti-national."[17] Then, however, the column was discontinued. The reasons for it are unknown, but it is not impossible

to surmise that at that point, any criticisms of Japan's anti-Comintern Pact allies could entail problems with the colonial censorship.

## "Buddhist State-Protection Principle"

However, much more typical was loud enunciation of the "Buddhist patriotism," which soon was identified as most compatible with both the "total war" and the totalitarian system—the word "totalitarian" being used in utterly positive sense. The September 1, 1938, editorial in monthly Buddhist tabloid *Pulgyo Sibo*, likely written by its publisher Kim T'aehŭp (1889–1989), assured, for example, that "state-protection principle" (*hogukchuŭi*) is a cornerstone of Buddhism. The primary reason given for this was that the Buddhists were expected to repay the four great benefactors—state's ruler, their own parents, Three Treasures of Buddhism (Buddha, his Dharma, and Sangha), and all the other people.[18] The textual source of this concept is *Great Vehicle Sūtra of Contemplation of the Mind Ground in the Buddha's Life* (Ch. *Dasheng benshengxindiguan jing*; Kor. *Taesŭng ponsaeng simjikwan kyŏng*), most likely a Chinese apocrypha. However, the editorial represented the "repayment of ruler's kindness" as simultaneously a universal Buddhist principle dating back to Buddha himself, and a feature of Japanese and Korean Buddhism.

It was hardly possible to ascribe a defense of "state-protective warfare" to Buddha himself, so instead, the editorial authors chose the strategy of presenting Buddha as, at least, a devout monarchist. Thus, they cited a passage from *Rājāvavādaka-sūtra* (Ch. *Fowei shengguangtianzi shuojing*; Kor.: *Pulwi sŭnggwangch'ŏnja sŏlgyŏng*) admonishing the royal subjects to regard their ruler as "loving parents, who care [for their children] indiscriminately."[19] This sutra is known for its famous admonishment to remember the effects of karma, which follows even the kings as a shadow, and includes, among other advices to the royals, a recommendation to ease the burdens of taxes and levies upon their people—but this aspect of the sutra's teaching, of course, went ignored in this editorial. Instead, the readers were asked to remember the "state-protection principles" putatively upheld by Kūkai (774–835), Dōgen (1200–1253), and Nichiren (1222–1282). Together with this, they were told about the heroism of a Paekche monk, Toch'im, who (in alliance with the Yamato authorities) struggled in 660–661 against the Silla and Chinese Tang invaders, and the loyalty of Silla's famed monk Chajang (590–658) who supposedly gave off his studies in China to return home and warn his compatriots of the impending Chinese invasion. The editorial was obviously a sloppy piece of writing—it was Ŭisang (625–702) and not Chajang, who was known to have prematurely ended the studies in Tang China to inform the Silla court of the Chinese plans to invade Silla.[20] But it was seemingly successful in fulfilling its particular aim, namely to project an image of a common, Japanese-Korean, Buddhist tradition of "state protection" by

military means. And to do so, all the mentions of any episodes, when Korean Buddhists took the arms against the Japanese—like the participation of the monks' militias in the struggle against the Hideyoshi invasion of 1592–1598—were carefully taken away.

## Buddhism as "The Religion of Totality"

What an unsigned editorial in January 1939 issue of monthly *Pulgyo* boldly called now a "sacred war" (*sŏngjŏn*) against the "anti-Japanese resistant government of Guomindang allied to the Communists" (Editorial, 1939), became soon an object of much more detailed and concentrated Buddhist reflection. A lengthy article by certain Hyŏn Tang in January 1940 issue of *Pulgyo* attempted to redefine Buddhism as a whole as a religion of "totality"—with the understanding that putting "total" before "individual" and preferring "totalitarianism" (*chŏnch'ejuŭi*) to "individualism" (*kaeinjuŭi*) was "the main trend of our times." Buddhism was explained by Hyŏn as the religion focusing on the totality of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha—and emphatically *not* on an individual human. An individual, in the Buddhist understanding of the world, was supposed to eschew "egoistic desires," to adopt a completely "self-sacrificing Bodhisattva attitude," and to fully entrust oneself to Buddha. And, so far as the socio-political side was concerned, the paradigm of "new Buddhism" was to be based upon "*chakravartin*'s theology," *chakravartin* being the earthly equivalent of the metaphysical "totality" of the whole cosmos. Avatamsaka (Ch. *Huayan*; Kor. *Hwaŏm*; Jap. *Kegon*) Buddhism's image of interpenetrating, wholesome totality—"one in all, all in one"—was an obvious choice for Hyŏn to illustrate his picture of Buddhism as a teaching viewing a "part" only in the context of the "whole."

This emphasis upon "wholeness" and "totality" was not only generally Buddhist, but also specifically Korean: the main luminaries of Korea's ancient Buddhism, especially Wŏnhyo (617–686) and Wŏnch'ŭk (613–696), were viewed by Hyŏn as "pan-Buddhist" (*t'ongpulgyojŏk*) philosophers, able and willing to transcend sectarianism in search of "harmony" (*chohwa*). In fact, in saying so Hyŏn was repeating the arguments first articulated by Ch'oe Namsŏn (1890–1957), who, in search of Korean Buddhism's "past greatness" comparable to the inclusiveness and completeness claimed by the modern Japanese Buddhist ideologists for the Japanese Buddhist tradition, chose Wŏnhyo as the supposed pinnacle of the "trans-sectarian trend" in the Korean Buddhist history.[21] As a good example of what "transcending sectarianism" could mean in practice, Hyŏn took the Meiji time "patriotic Buddhist" association, "Great Association for Revering the Emperor and Venerating the Buddha" (*Sōnno hōbutsu daidōdan*, founded in 1889). The war was not mentioned at all in this, rather scholarly-looking, piece of the writing—but the socio-political implications of the renewed focus on the all-encompassing "Buddhist totality" were more than obvious.[22]

## "War Is Compassion"

Avatamsaka Buddhism was certainly a convenient Buddhist explanatory frame easily appropriable by the mobilizational state bent on infinite self-aggrandizement. It had old connections to the East Asian rulers and their ideologies since the times of its Chinese founders Zhiyan (602–668) and Fazang (643–712),[23] and time-honored tradition of the political use of the "one in all, all in one" doctrine.[24] It was not, however, the only Buddhist doctrine seemingly available for the "imperial" use in the wartime. Another and obvious choice, at a pre-sectarian, pan-Buddhist level, was the Bodhisattva doctrine of selflessness and altruistic love. Since the state already usurped the right to represent the social totality, that is, the community of the unspecified persons around each individual, it was only fully logical that it would be promoted as a main potential beneficiary of the unselfish altruistic actions.

As an article in yet another issue of monthly *Pulgyo* in 1940 stated, the "famed Japanese spirit, which the people talk so much about these days," was nothing more than a variation of the Buddhist topic of altruism. The "other" (*t'a*) the altruistic action would benefit (*ri*) in such a case, would be the ruler and the state. The Korean Buddhism, with its focus on benefiting the other even at the price of one's own life (*sasin'it'a*), was, it was assured, hardly different.[25] The emphasis not only specifically on the Bodhisattva ideal, but, broader, on the overall "Mahāyāna spirit" of both Japanese and Korean Buddhism was principally important for the development of "total-war Buddhism" ideology. As the dean of the scholarly monks of colonial Korea, Kwŏn Sangno (1879–1965), authoritatively pronounced, the principles of the whole Japanese Empire were basically the same as that of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Mahāyāna meant to turn the totality of cosmos into one blessed Buddha Land, while the Empire was striving to keep the "Calm and Enlightened Lands of the Orient," and the "Yellow-race Buddhist" safe from the "armies of devils" bent on "violating" and "sacrificing" them. The "sacred war," thus, assumed both a cosmic proportion and a visible Mahāyāna Buddhist dimension. The only way for the "Yellow Buddhists" to exercise their cardinal virtue of mercifulness, or compassion (*chabi*) was to actively participate in "saving the sentient beings from the hell and turning our land and times into a paradise" by patiently enduring the "pains of hunger, diseases and armed struggle" and bravely answering Empire's summon.

Participation in a "sacred war" was the ultimate realisation of the Bodhisattva way. A good example of doing so was the heroism of the Korean monks' militias in the days of Hideyoshi invasion. Of course, Kwŏn prudently refrained from specifying which enemy these militias actually battled against.[26] Interestingly, the writings identifying the collaboration with war efforts with the Bodhisattva Way tended not to mention at all that participation in a war implied sacrificing the lives of the others concurrently with "unselfish" sacrifice of one's own. The ethical problems surrounding battlefield killing were avoided, or rather subsumed under the rhetoric of

"struggle against the devils;" and the "devilish" nature of the enemy was implicitly a licence for "dharmically clean" killing in the spirit of Buddha and Bodhisattvas.

## Selfless Bodhisattvas, Selfless Warriors

While the reality of battlefield carnage was being veiled by the rhetoric of "Bodhisattva self-sacrifice," the ultimately egoistic nature of any inter-state armed conflict was covered into the rhetoric of Japan's Buddhist exclusivity. It is not that only the modern Japanese Empire was striving unselfishly to save the "Yellow race Buddhists" from the "devilish aggression" of the "great power predators" (as Kwŏn Sangno formulated it). Japan as a state and nation was special from the very beginning, it its very deepest essence. The Japanese, with their "born" empathy for the "harmonious and wholesome" teachings of Mahāyāna, are "naturally" altruistic, always able and willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of state and righteousness—in contrast to individualistic and utilitarian Chinese, for example. While the Indian Buddhists did not rise higher than the level of seeking paradise for themselves and calculating their karmic merits, the Japanese Buddhism is epitomized by the absolute, total rejection of oneself and complete trust in Amitabha's saving powers preached by Shinran (1173–1263). Japan's "founder," "Emperor" Jimmu, initially built Japan on the ideals of the "ethical unification" of the whole world. In this way, he paralleled Buddha's merciful, parent-like care for all the sentient beings in the three worlds. Japan, thus, is not simply *a* state waging *a* war with others. It is *the* savior of the whole world, waging *the* titanic, cosmic struggle for refurbishing it into a Buddhist ethical paradise.[27]

The efforts of the Korean scholarly monks to represent Japan as essentially *the* Buddhist state and Buddhism as essentially *the* Japanese religion were duly assisted by their Japanese colleagues. Eda Toshio (1898–1957), a known expert on both Japanese and Korean Buddhism, claimed in an article translated into Korean and published in *Pulgyo* in December 1940, that Buddhism suits the "Japanese national character" ideally, being fundamentally Japan's "national religion." In the process of "Japanization," it "purified" itself from all the "non-essential" elements of Indian and Chinese culture "mixed" with it, and at last "revealed to the world its real meaning and real value." Japan's "Imperial way" shared with Buddhism both its intention to make the whole world an "ethical paradise," and the basic quality of "rejection of ego" (or "selflessness"—Kor. *mor'a;* Jap. *botsuga*)—a self-sacrificing imperial subject being already a Bodhisattva. Being a learned expert on Buddhist doctrine, Eda went further than simply the superficial declarations on the "essential unity" of Buddhism and "Imperial way" and characterized Dogen's idea of "oneness of practice and enlightenment," which implied that a practitioner did not have to deliberately seek enlightenment for oneself as "characteristically Japanese."

Unlike the self-minded Indians or Chinese, the logic went, the selfless Japanese did not try to simply benefit themselves through religion, but understood the transcendent truth of the unity of the profane and sacred. The same "selflessness" was traced also in Shinran's way of completely entrusting oneself to Amitabha, losing all desire to save oneself and reciting Amitabha's name with the only wish of repaying the almighty savior's endless grace.[28] If one follows this logic, selflessly sacrificing one's life on the battlefield struggling for the sake of the "selfless, ethical" empire built upon the principles, which are essentially Buddhist, should not have constituted a moral offence. However, at this stage most of the Buddhist writings urging the collaboration with state's war effort stopped short of the direct appeal to commit murder in the name of "Buddha's empire."

## War as "Practice of Buddhist Perfections"

With the war growing into a direct conflict with the "Christian power," the US, broadening its scope and requiring much higher degree of sacrifice, the Buddhist war propaganda changed accordingly. It was gradually becoming much more direct, vituperative, and demonizing, the battlefield death and killing being represented now as a sacred, ceremonial act of "cleansing" the world from the demons. Kwŏn Sangno, at that time probably the most authoritative public voice of Buddhism, was spearheading the campaign, and published several articles representing the war as a great cosmic battle with the "Western demons." In an article published in January 1942, he compared the "head vampire nations, Britain and America, ( . . . ) the wild tigers and poisonous snakes from whose mouths our Empire attempts to save China," with Māra Pāpiyān (Kor. Mawang P'asun), the head of demons who tried to distract meditating Gautama Buddha in a bid to prevent him from obtaining the Great Enlightenment. "Obstinate America afraid of the light emanated by our Empire's great principles" represented the head demon, while Britain, Australia, Canada, and the Netherlands found themselves in the category of "demonic women and demonic people" mobilized by the evil Māra Pāpiyān. "Fighting the demonic troops to the very last moment" became thus a religious act aimed at turning the world from evilness to goodness and ultimately leading all the sentient beings to their enlightenment.

The very act of fighting was represented by Kwŏn Sangno as a way of realization of the six *paramitas* (perfections; transcendent practices)—enduring the hardships of the front equated the *paramita* of forbearance (Sanskr. *Ksanti*; Kor. *in'yok*), bravely rushing forward paralleled the *paramita* of efforts (Sanskr. *Vīrya*; Kor. *chŏngjin*), while taking an oath to repay state's kindness by one's death and keeping the order of the battle was nothing less than realization of the *paramita* of meditation (Sanskr. *Dhyana*; Kor. *sŏnjŏng*). "Hundreds of millions" of Koreans, Japanese and other subjects of the Empire were asked by Kwŏn Sangno to bravely seek

their deaths ("these who were once born, would die anyway") so that the "demons" would be completely defeated and transformed, the enemy capitals of London and Washington ultimately becoming the cities of "light, joy and wholesomeness."[29] This piece is quite remarkable for its "demonological" exquisiteness and for directly equating the act of fighting with the practice of Buddhism's cardinal virtues. However, for many lay Buddhists the worship of Buddhist deities could mean much more than the ideology of *paramitas* practice—and Kwŏn Sangno was quick to additionally publish a piece on the significance of the Avalokiteshvara (Kor. Kwanseŭm) warship in the wartime. Avalokiteshvara's supernatural, miraculous protective power was supposed to help the worshippers to escape any harm even in the hail of bullets on the battlefield. It was also needed to help the worshippers to obtain *abhaya* (fearlessness; Kor. *muoe*), the quality so highly priced on the frontline.[30] Buddhism was fast moving to proudly become a "psychological weapon" of sorts on the battlefields of the Pacific War.

## Great War, Great Visions

Did the Korean Buddhist propagandists of the "Great East Asian War" themselves believe in the ideological articulations they produced? Or were they just unavoidably following the chief topics of the Japanese imperial propaganda in an attempt to keep and improve their positions? Some of the expressions used by Kwŏn Sangno and others—for example, the purported ideal of legendary "Emperor" Jimmu, *hakkō ichiu* (Kor. *p'algoeng'ir'u*—"the whole world under one roof"), which supposedly paralleled the Buddhist teachings of totality and universal salvation—were certainly just the stock phrases from the contemporaneous Japanese war propaganda. They were obligatory to use in the article on current affairs under the press control system in the late 1930s–early 1940s in colonial Korea. However, some of the pro-war articles in the wartime Korean Buddhist media present the political speculations showing obvious traces of original thinking. One of the best-known Buddhist collaborators with the Japanese, Yi Chong'uk (1884–1969), for example, presented in his piece extolling the virtues of the Japanese-imposed draft and appealing to the youth to "take the oath of becoming the bullets of blood (*hyŏlt'an*) and then transforming yourselves into the real flowers of the universe," some quite imaginative political calculations:

> "It is imaginable that once Britain will be pushed to its lifeline, India, it will be on verge of a total defeat. As to the Americans, even in case their declarations of the increase in war spending are in reality false, they cannot be so easily dealt with. However, their efforts may just come too late. So, in the end the British will have to evacuate Australia and India and retreat to Canada, and is it completely impossible that the world finally will be divided between the Americans and British based in North America, and Asia and Europe conquered by our Empire [and its allies].

> In this case, Asia and Europe will be reconstructed, and the eventual defeat of the Americans and the British will be in sight at some point"[31]

It looks as if Yi, relying on the Japanese mass media for the information on the war developments, was imagining a new world in which British colonies in Asia and Oceania will be overtaken by Japan and Britain itself will be ultimately overtaken by the Axis states, while the US would continue a long-time anti-Japanese resistance. He seemingly took at face value the Japanese declarations of the continuous military successes in Asia, while being more sceptical about the perspectives of a victory over unimaginably more powerful "American enemy." In any case, Japan was at least winning its Asian battles and its victories over much older great powers had to be somehow explained.

The standard explanation from the Korean Buddhist circles was the inferior "materialistic" nature of the whole "Western civilization." Hŏ Yŏngho (1900-?), a well-known Buddhist intellectual and (from 1941) a secretary to the spiritual head of the umbrella organization of all Korean Buddhists, Chogyejong, wrote in an article in 1942 that Japan's success in expelling the "materialist civilization" of the British and Americans from Asia reflected the time-honored "dream" of the Asian people. They were, he assured, long bent on settling the scores with their "century-old enemies," who used to "paralyze" the Asian civilizations with their "egoistic" ideas. The "Great East Asian War" was also the battle against the Jews, the "running dogs of the materialistic things," who "plotted" together with the inimical Anglo-Americans in a bid to secure the world dominance for themselves.[32] Apart from obvious influences from fascist Germany, this passage may also reflect the obsession of the Korean Buddhist intellectuals of the late 1930s with the polemics against the "Judeo-Christian" religious ideas understood to be Buddhism's foremost competitor worldwide. The war, in a word, was formulated as a "clash of civilizations" of sorts, in which Buddhism, as "the essence" of both "Japanese" and "Asian" civilization, was to play an important role.

## Influences from the Japanese "Imperial Buddhism"

It is beyond doubt, however, that even in the case the Korean Buddhist propagandists for the "Great East Asian War" were exercising a measure of the agency of their own in understanding the nature of the conflict and making their bets on it, much of the ideology they used was borrowed from their imperial masters, at least, in its most basic features. Avatamsaka philosophy of universal, interpenetrating totality was, for example, equalled with Japan's "unparalleled national polity" by such important modern Buddhist thinkers as Kametani Seikei (1858–1930) or Japan's great modern Hegelian, Kihira Tadayoshi (1874–1949). The latter thought that Avatamsaka philosophy was superior to Hegelianism, and regarded the Imperial

House as the "absolute" paralleling the cosmic Buddha, Vairochana. The interpretation of Japan's "original national ideas" as "essentially totalitarian" originally belonged to Takakusu Junjirō (1866–1949), a great Buddhist scholar, while the very slogan *hakkō ichiu,* supposedly "paralleling the Buddhist teachings of totality," was popularized by the Nichiren sect scholar, Tanaka Chigaku (1861–1939).[33] However, Korea's own Buddhist history was also actively utilized for legitimizing the wartime cooperative relationship between the Buddhist community and the state.

## "Korean State-protective Buddhism" Glorified

Typically, well-known monastic intellectual, Pŏbun (Pak Taeryun, 1884–1979, the founder of T'aego Order in 1970), serialized his views on the role of Buddhism in the history of the Korean statehood in monthly *Pulgyo* in 1944. A member of the privileged abbots' elite—to become a high functionary of both Chogye and T'aego orders in future after the decolonization—he offered highly representative views on what he considered the ideal model of the state-Sangha relationship and what, in his opinion, those relationship were in Korean history. From the very beginning of his text, Pak Taeryun proclaims that, by its own nature, Buddhism is "destined to assist the state, make its fortunes glorious, and enter into special relationship with it." The foundations of this ideal were, according to Pak Taeryun, laid already by Buddha Shakyamuni himself, who urged "kings and ministers" to "protect and disseminate" the Buddhist Law. The Buddhist Law, in its turn, can help the state not only through the moral perfection of its subjects, but also by the whole range of religious and "mystic" means, becoming, in effect, part of the state's "spiritual capabilities." The degree of cohesion between state and Buddhism seems to Pak to increase progressively: Mahāyāna Buddhism, with its idea of "non-duality of mundane/sacred, layman/monks, *samsara/nirvana,*" was able to enter into "non-dual" relationship with the state also, shouldering a whole range of state functions and enjoying the benefit of full state protection and support. For Pak, this "inherent non-duality of state and Buddhism" reached its "utmost development" in Japan and Korea.

Concerning the adoption of Buddhism by Koguryŏ king Sosurim (r. 371–384) in 372, Pak states that, first, the penetration of this religion into Koguryŏ was made possible exclusively by the conscious state policy of importation of this foreign creed. Second, as to the reasons for such policy, Pak cites a variety of diplomatic, military, and educational consideration, claiming, in effect, that the adoption of Buddhism by the state was just one in the chain of state policies aimed at strengthening the state and monarchical power. Then, continues Pak, Buddhism thrived under the sponsorship and protection of Sosurim's successors, serving the state for "praying for the well-being of state and its subjects." Overall, the first stage of Koguryŏ Buddhist history is described by Pak as the period of "total unity of the

State and Buddhist Law" and their "common efflorescence." Then, he cites the examples of usage of some defrocked Buddhist priests as spies in anti-Paekche warfare as the proof of allegedly "total" "unity" between the State and the creed. On the other hand, he cites the defection of Koguryŏ monk Hyeryang to Silla in 551 as the example of behavior of a "patriotic monk" in the situation when "kings lost their wisdom and started to persecute Buddhist community, using Taoism as guiding ideology instead." Then, the tradition of Buddhist disciplinary assemblies "P'algwanhoe," transmitted by the defector from Koguryŏ to Silla, is considered by Pak both "patriotic"/"state-protective" and "based on the amalgamation with native cults."[34] As it was the case with the "patriotic Buddhism" theoreticians in Imperial Japan, the ability of Buddhism to syncretise with the local cults was taken as a sign of its ultimate "belonging" to the state and "nation."

## Decolonization, but Not Demilitarization

Decolonization in 1945 did not bring any essential changes to the militaristic *habitus* developed by colonial-time Korea's institutional Buddhism in 1937–1945. The best-known propagandist of the "Buddhist totalitarianism," "state-protection Buddhism," and "sacred war," typically Kwŏn Sangno, managed to keep and even enhance their positions inside the South Korean Buddhist establishment. The South Korean state soon came to need their talents in legitimizing war. As soon as the Korean War (1950–1953) started, the "northern Communists" were labelled as "devils" by the representatives of the Buddhist community, who also hasted to proclaim the new war a "sacred" one. Now, it was rather ideology, broadly defined, than race—in contrast to the "American devils" of the Pacific War time, the new existential enemy of the South Korean state and, *ergo*, South Korean Buddhist community were Koreans ideologically marked as "inimical Others." The same lexicon of demonization was used by the South Korean Christians, Protestants, and Catholics alike.[35] Once again, just like in 1937–1945, diverse confessional establishment came to "transcend" their rivalries in common loyalty to the "state-protective" orthodoxy.

In 1964, Buddhist Chogye Order, striving to catch up with its Christian rivals, who used to send military chaplains to the standing army units all the time since the Korean War, officially asked South Korea's military rulers to allow the Buddhist chaplaincy in the army. The permission was granted in 1966, and in August 1966, ten Buddhist missionaries (including some young intellectuals who grew in famous Buddhism scholars later—Mok Chŏngbae, O Hyŏnggŭn, etc.) went to serve their obligatory term in the armed forces as chaplains. By 1996, the military possessed more than 50 field temples (*kun pŏptang*), and by 2008, the figure rose to about 400, with 140 Buddhist chaplains (*kunsŭng*) and 550 missionaries. This system allowed institutional Buddhism to save at least a fraction of its youthful talents from the burden of often hazardous frontline service, but at the

same time served to cement the organizational connections between the Chogye Order and the military establishment.[36] Not everybody, however, is lucky enough to be sent to serve as a chaplain, and the rhetoric of the "state-protection Buddhism"—of course, no longer as vociferous as in the time of the Pacific War, but nevertheless showing clear continuity with the colonial past—is continuously used to justify the drafting of the monks and lay Buddhist activists irrespective of their religious convictions. And why there were two Buddhist laymen conscientious objectors (O T'aeyang and Kim Tohyŏng) who were imprisoned in the 2000s (South Korea has no alternative service provisions),[37] no monk requested the conscientious objector status so far. The whole debate on the compatibility of the military service with the monastic status is largely tabooed inside the monastic community, which seems to be afraid of showing "disloyalty" to the state. The saga of the militarized Buddhism, with its beginnings going back to the times of Pacific War, is still continuing.

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# Conclusion

*Torkel Brekke*

In this book, we have collected the insights and research of academics specializing in the relationship between Buddhism, nationalism, and militarism in different parts of Asia. The chapters have presented fascinating cases from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos, Japan, Korea, and China, and they have explored some of the most difficult and disturbing questions concerning roles of a world religion in nationalist and militarist ideologies and in situations of war and insurgency. The chapters taken together establish beyond doubt that Buddhism may have a significant role in such ideologies and situations: as a religious source of legitimacy and moral philosophy, as symbolic representation of national identity or royal authority, or as institutions actively taking on functions such as chaplaincy or ritual experts catering to military personnel. To anyone familiar with the modern history of Asian societies, such a broad conclusion probably sounds obvious and superfluous. Why would anybody expect Buddhism to be qualitatively different from other world religions in this respect? However, to many readers less familiar with the Buddhist tradition I suspect that this may come as a surprise: I have lost count of the occasions when I have discussed with students or colleagues, or people working in the media, who have defended the assumption that Buddhism "really," or "essentially," is peaceful, as opposed to Christianity or Islam. Coming from Buddhist activists or organizations such views are understandable as long as they are meant as normative statements rather than analytical statements about history. However, in my view, when coming from academics or media people the discourse about "peaceful Buddhism" is just as unhelpful as the discourse about "violent Islam." Although some of our contributors are Buddhists themselves, this book takes an outsider's approach in terms of method as it looks at Buddhism in a variety of localized expressions and institutionalisations that must be studied empirically, and it aims to correct some of the simplistic notions of the roles of Buddhism in modern history.

Before we try to summarize the findings it may be helpful to include a brief summary of the different chapters. Vladimir Tikhonov introduced the volume by discussing the relations between Buddhism and militarism within the research on religion and violence broadly. In his chapter about

ethno-nationalism and militarism in Sri Lanka, the Venerable Dr. Mahinda Deegalle gave a critical examination of the involvement of Buddhist clergy in the heated political debates of the country in the early twenty-first century. He gave an account of how the JVP and the LTTE on each side of the island state created cultures of nationalism where violence was seen to be a legitimate means to change society. The conflict between the government and the LTTE became full-scale war from 1983, while the JVP started several bloody insurrections, in the late 70s and in the late 80s, and both challenges were met with military measures by the state. Deegalle also discussed the continued militarization of Sri Lankan society after the end of the civil war in 2009 and he looked at the latest developments in the country's troubled politics. Deegalle's main focus was the controversial involvement of Buddhist monks in parliamentary politics. The venerable Samhita was the first monk to hold real political office in the modern parliamentary system of Sri Lanka. This was in 2001 and Ven. Samhita argued for a constructive approach to the peace process. However, in the election of 2004, nine monks were elected to the Parliament from the newly established party Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) on a platform promising the establishment of Dharma Rajya, i.e., Buddhist rule. The JHU was a novel political and religious development that signaled a hard line against the LTTE, strong criticism of the peace process, and a defense of Buddhist culture against what hardliner monks perceived as the aggressive missionary activity of evangelical Christians.

Marte Nilsen's chapter explored how the Thai state is trying to secure Buddhism in the southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat in the face of an insurgency in the area. The insurgency in the south of the country is coached in religious rhetoric, and it claimed several thousand lives during the first decade of the twenty-first century. From the time when the area was annexed by the Siamese king in 1909, policies of establishing Buddhist temples and monuments, as well as ensuring a steady Buddhist population, have been pursued by both national authorities and royal institutions. In times of Malay Muslim separatist insurgency, the Thai military has also been contributing to this mission. In recent years, the military presence has escalated accordingly. Nilsen discussed how temple grounds function as military bases and soldiers receive ordination as monks, while continuing to serve the military, as so-called "military monks," in order to protect the temples and their inhabitants. These military monks (*phra tahan*) are operating as protectors of their *wat*, as soldiers, being armed and continuing to receive their military salaries, and at the same time acting as monks in the Buddhist Sangha. Nilsen investigated how the concept of Dhammaraja-Buddhism and the idea of "Thainess" in modern Thai history have provided legitimacy to the involvement of state power and militarization of Buddhist in the south.

Cho Sungtaek showed how the historiography of modern Korean Buddhism has to a large degree been a nationalist narrative emphasizing the

dichotomy between Korean and Japanese traditions. Korea suffered as a Japanese colony from 1910 to the end of the Second World War. In the Korean nationalist narrative, the dominant Chogye Order would define the essence of modern Korean Buddhism, since it was perceived as a denomination that preserved the national identity of Korean Buddhism in the face of the oppressive assimilation policy of the Japanese. However, as Cho Sungtaek argued, nationalist historiography simplifies the history and nature of modern Korean Buddhism, and he suggested that we use the concept of dilemma for a deeper understanding of those aspects of modern Korean Buddhism that have escaped attention in nationalist historiography. Key dilemmas, according to Cho, were, firstly, the fact that both the occupied and the occupier predominantly supported variants of Buddhism, and, secondly, that many of the modern enlightenment intellectuals in Korea had a profoundly ambivalent relationship to the Buddhist tradition. In order to understand the role of Buddhism in modern Korean nationalism we need to understand these and other dilemmas.

In Part 2 we collected chapters with a focus on the role of the Buddhist monk. In his chapter, Michael Jerryson took the symbolism surrounding the figure of the monk as his point of departure in a chapter about militant Buddhism in Thailand in the context of the recent conflict in the southern provinces bordering Malaysia, thus expanding our exploration of the situation described in the chapter by Nilsen. Everybody with an interest in Buddhism knows that the monks (and somewhere also nuns) have a very special position in society because they sacrifice worldly attachments and give lay people an opportunity to earn merit by donating. However, the sacralization of the monk's body in Thailand also means that attacks on monks become a powerful way for insurgents to deface a symbol of the state, Jerryson pointed out. There have been a number of attacks on monks and temples in southern Thailand. Although some of these attacks may have been related to mundane conflicts about drug-trafficking, they often lead to emotional reactions from the media and state authorities. In response, the Thai authorities have organized volunteer programs for monks from other parts of Thailand to spend time in the temples of the south to strengthen Buddhism in the troubled areas. In this process, the Thai state politicizes monks and Buddhism, Jerryson argued.

The civil war in Sri Lanka was the subject in the chapter by Iselin Frydenlund. She interviewed Buddhist monks about their attitudes to the conflict and about their relations to the military and the state in the period 2000–2008. Frydenlund took as her point of departure the fact that nonviolence is a fundamental part of the debate about the role of Buddhism and Buddhist monks in the conflict. There is in fact a widespread belief both among monks and soldiers that Buddhism is essentially non-violent. At the same time, monks have been outspoken in their support for a military solution to the conflict and they have been mostly critical of concessions made to the LTTE during the peace process of 2002–2003. For

obvious reasons, the relationship between monks and the Armed Forces have been very close in many parts of the country; in the eastern and northern parts of the island monks have depended on the military for protection. Army personnel, being mostly Buddhists, have often been in need of the religious services of the monks. Monks preach in order to give consolation to soldiers and they give *paritta* recitals for the protection of the army. In the Army Headquarters at Panagode, the close relationship between Buddhism and the military is institutionalized in The Buddhist Army Association. At Panagode, relatives of fallen soldiers can donate meals to the monks and the merits earned may be transferred to the dead. Leading Army officers even receive blessings in the shrine-room of the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, the foremost symbol of religious and political power in Sri Lanka for centuries. While Sri Lanka does not have military monks of the kind we find in Thailand, Frydenlund asserted that Buddhist monks have no difficulties with giving religious legitimacy to the war. This is possible because the canon and the tradition itself are ambiguous about the legitimacy of violence and Frydenlund argued that essentialist arguments about Buddhism's pacifism are misguided.

Ian Baird explained how the Tham Krabok temple in Thailand and some of its leading monks became an important center for Hmong people in their insurgency against the Communist government of neighboring Laos. The historical backdrop for Baird's account was the Cold War as it played itself out in Southeast Asia. During the Vietnam war the US found an important ally in the Hmong people and Hmong groups fought the North Vietnamese and their Pathet Lao allies resulting in harsh retribution from the Lao People's Democratic Republic after 1975. (The Laotian Communists, the Pathet Lao, came to power in 1975 and established Lao People's Democratic Republic.) In this context, the Tham Krabok temple got a strong political profile and received considerable support from right-wing milieus in the Thai police and military, and from the Thai monarchy, in the struggle against Communist rule in Laos. The first abbot of the Tham Krabok temple, Luang Por Chamroon, seems to have been close to Kittivuddho, the extremist, anti-communist Thai monk that we met in the chapter by Suwanna Satha-Ananda. The Buddhist monks provided both relief to Hmong refugees from Laos and various kinds of support for rebels involved in cross-border operations. According to Baird, it is unclear whether the Buddhist monks provided weapons to the Hmong rebels, which would have violated the basic Buddhist Vinaya, but they did provide much moral support as well as logistic and strategic assistance in the insurgency. Of course, as in the other regional cases in this book, opinions would diverge sharply about whether such direct support in war would amount to a violation of Buddhist precepts and morality.

Micah Auerback's chapter was about two Buddhist clerics active as chaplains in the Russo-Japanese War. The first, Shaku Soen (1860–1919), was a Zen cleric of the Rinzai denomination and one of most widely traveled

and cosmopolitan clerics of his day. The second was a cleric of the Amidaist Honganji sect, Sato Gan'ei (1875–?). Buddhist military chaplaincy represented an important area of collaboration between mainstream Buddhist denominations and military authorities during the late Meiji period up to the Japanese defeat in 1945. For his analysis of Shaku Soen's chaplaincy, Auerback used the famous Zen monk's diaries from the spring in 1904, when he was attached to the Japanese First Army Division in Manchuria fighting the Russian forces. Soen's work as chaplain consisted in Dharma talks, visits and consoling talks with injured soldiers, and participation at memorial rites for dead soldiers. These were the normal activities for the Buddhist chaplains attached to Japanese forces in this period of foreign wars. Auerback looked closely at the ideas contained in Soen's writings and showed how this famous Buddhist used religious ideas both to install inner strength and fearlessness in the individual soldiers and to defend the larger cause of the war as a cosmic battle against Māra, the Buddhist Satan. While Soen in many places comments on the horrors of war, he was never in doubt about the righteousness of the Japanese cause in the war against Russia and he would never become part of the peace movement, as some other noted clerics.

The chapters in Part 3 had a general focus on how Buddhist doctrine, narrative, and symbols have been used to justify violence. In her chapter, Suwanna Satha-Anand argued that Thai Buddhism as a state ideology has played a major role in defending peace and national identity while at the same time justifying war, violence and religious intolerance. She looked at a sermon by a Supreme Patriarch in order to see how the foremost representative of Thai Buddhism justified King Rama VI's decision in 1917 to send troops to assist England and France in the Great War. As a result of the Siamese gesture of support, King Rama VI was granted the rank of Honorary General in the English Army. In the sermon, the Supreme Patriarch utilized several canonical sources to justify the King's decision. Moving closer to our own times, Satha-Anand looked at the rhetoric of the militant Thai Buddhist monk Kittivuddho who argued that killing is legitimate to defend the Thai state. Kittivuddho asserted that killing communists is not really killing. The fear and anxiety of global communism spreading to the countries in Southeast Asia was the context of the rise of militant Buddhism in the 1970s. Finally, Satha-Anand looked at how Thai Buddhists see religious and ethnic minorities in Thailand.

Xue Yu's chapter showed how violence and war has been treated in Buddhism, both in earlier Buddhist canons and in the history of the Chinese Buddhism including its modern parts. From this chapter—which, in seeking the doctrinal roots of the modern and contemporary Buddhist discourses on violence and war, directly relates to all the other chapters of this book—it becomes clear that from the very beginning the Buddhist attitudes towards warfare were deeply ambiguous, to the point of looking somewhat self-contradictory. On one hand, the negative karmic effects of any violence

were obvious for the Buddha and his Dharmic heirs. On the other hand, they lived in a society where war-making was an organic part of the general business of governance, and did not try to essentially change the existing societal order, being content with the ability to personally avoid participation in the "unwholesome" activities like war. As Buddhism acquired more mainstream status, however, some Buddhist canonical texts, especially from the Mahāyāna tradition, came to justify "licit" violence (warfare by a Dharma-defending king, or various kinds of criminal justice), either on specifically Buddhist doctrinal grounds ("emptiness is the only true reality, thus in the end nobody gets really killed") or on grounds comparable to the Christian varities of the "just war" theory ("to kill in order to prevent a worse loss of life"). In the Chinese Buddhist tradition, monks sometimes were called upon to assist the state in war-making; during the anti-Japanese war of resistance (1931–1945), even direct participation of the monks in the battlefield killing was already seen as a commendable fulfilment of the national patriotic duty. With the pre-modern Buddhist justifications for the militarist violence as the starting point, modern nationalism came to overrun the traditional Buddhist reservations against taking life.

Kawase Takaya's chapter looks at how justifications for militarism were challenged by Buddhist organizations in Japan after the Second World War. The chapter started with an historical overview of the relationship between Buddhism and militarism in Japan from the Meiji restoration starting in 1868 to the end of the Second World War. In the Edo Period (1600–1868), Buddhism was de facto state religion and in the new imperial Japan appearing in the last part of the nineteenth-century Buddhism was assigned a role as supporter of the state's colonial expansion in Asia. During the first Sino-Japanese War (1894) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904) Buddhist chaplains contributed in the war effort by conducting memorial rites for the dead and giving sermons to the soldiers in the field. In fact, Kawase Takaya asserted, Japanese Buddhists became a part of the country's imperialism and militarism until defeat in 1945. After the war, however, the focus changed completely. The devastation of the nuclear attacks on Japan was a national trauma and many religious denominations organized to promote peace. The established Buddhist denominations were part of this new culture for peace and interreligious dialogue. However, in the long run it turned out that the new religious movements of Japan, many with roots in Buddhism, were much better suited, because of organizational flexibility, at promoting and strengthening the social movement for peace in Japan.

Vladimir Tikhonov's chapter about the role of Korean Buddhists during the Pacific War 1937–1945 showed how the religion could be used by the state to support aggressive war. Korea was a colony of Imperial Japan from 1910 until Japan's defeat in 1945 and the Japanese colonial regime sought to strengthen their legitimacy by rallying the Buddhist establishment behind their policies. Clearly, this was a source of what Cho Suntaek labeled "dilemmas" in his chapter about nationalist historiography of Korean Buddhism. In

Korea, cooperation with the colonial authorities entailed significant benefits for Korean Buddhist temples. They were allowed a degree of internal autonomy in selecting abbots, and the Buddhist clerical elites strengthened their rights to property in exchange for political consent with the colonial power. This Faustian bargain, as Tikhonov called it, would exclude the clergy from the nationalist struggle for independence. When the Second Sino-Japanese War started in July 1937, the Japanese authorities were eager to mobilize the Buddhist institutions in Korea, as well as in Japan, to boost the morale of their forces in China. Buddhist monasteries were expected to arrange prayer meetings to strengthen the state and secure military fortune. In the period 1935–1945, Buddhist clergy employed Buddhist ideas to legitimize Japan's warfare and Tikhonov demonstrated how Korean Buddhists argued for a specifically Buddhist idea of totalitarianism, and how they found in classical Mahāyāna philosophy arguments to show how the Japanese war was really a sacred war waged against cosmic evil (the US and Britain) to turn the world into a Buddhist paradise. When the Pacific War ended in 1945 and the Korean War started in 1950, the military rhetoric of important Buddhist clergy simply shifted their target to the communist North.

All these chapters are in themselves valuable contributions to the understanding of Buddhism and its roles in nationalism and militarism and many of them contain substantial amounts of previously unpublished material about these questions. What are the larger issues and common themes arising from the detailed empirical studies presented by our authors? First of all, they discuss the complex situation of Buddhism in the context of modern nation-states. In the chapters on Sri Lanka and Thailand, the strong links between national feelings and Buddhist religion is obvious. Real or perceived pressures and threats from colonialism, and later from ethnic minorities, have led to new alliances between the Buddhist Sangha and the political and military elites of the two states. In Sri Lanka and Thailand the same forces and pressures created similar transformations in religion and society. The social and scientific revolutions brought about by colonialism and globalization from the mid-1800s led naturally to a strong feeling of national consciousness among Buddhists of the Theravāda countries. Because of changes in society there developed a distinct feeling for the close relationship between their national existence and the Buddhist religion.

In the East Asian states of China, Japan, and Korea the role of Buddhism in the development of nationalism was different. In Sri Lanka and Thailand (and we could add Burma) Theravāda Buddhism had always had an important legitimizing position vis-à-vis the political power. However, in the history of East Asia, Buddhism has often been a relatively more marginal religious tradition, and Buddhist clergy and institutions have experienced mistrust and even prosecution because it has been seen as otherworldly and anti-social. Of course, this marginalization tendency was uneven—it was much more pronounced in more Confucianized societies, such as China or Korea, and less pronounced in Japan. Nevertheless, Buddhism

was appropriated, as we have seen, by modern state leaders in all these countries—albeit to different degrees—in order to create legitimacy for patriotism and war efforts.

Secondly, the chapters all touch on how Buddhist ideas have been used to legitimize (or oppose) the use of violence in modern times. Many of the chapters demonstrate how Buddhist thinkers argue for the relevance of an ethics of intention. In some chapters, we have seen how Buddhists have argued that war is not really killing, at least it does not lead to demerit, as long as the intention of the soldier is of the right kind. In Buddhist moral philosophy, it is the preceding motivation (*cetana*) which determines the moral quality of the act and not its consequences. For Buddhists, the basic causes of *kamma* were greed, hate, and delusion; *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*. To free oneself from the entanglements of *kamma* one must strike at the mentality of the actor. It is the intention of the actor which is the motor in the continued production of *kamma* and of continued rebirth and suffering. Still, it is impossible to speak about Buddhist ethics as one thing. There are several reasons for this. First of all Buddhist ethics is not simply an ethics developed for people in general. Buddhism started out as an elitist movement with the goal of bringing adherents towards the goal of nirvana. This means that Buddhism at the outset had no intention of providing a code of conduct or a moral theory for lay people with their everyday problems. Ethics in its broadest sense was not very relevant to early Buddhists. When ethics first became relevant, it was as a code of rules (Patimokkha) to regulate the daily affairs of the monks and nuns. This daily code and the literature supporting the moral codes of the monks and nuns are called the Vinaya. Although the Vinaya is about moral rules, it is concerned with ethics only in a very limited sense and it is not intended to be read or practiced by persons outside the order of monks and nuns.

However, the types of legitimizing strategies analyzed in these chapters address not only individual motivations and consequences of action. We have also seen how in many cases Buddhist clerics and institutions work to construct an image of the enemy as a cosmic threat against a Buddhist order. This was the case in contexts where our authors looked at internal conflicts, as in Thailand and Sri Lanka, and where they looked at large inter-state wars, as the Russo-Japanese War and the Pacific War. In all cases, we can see how Buddhist symbolism and narrative can be employed to give enemies of the state evil qualities. A foreign people, or a minority residing within the borders of a Buddhist state, can be represented as the host of Māra, or as threats against a righteous Buddhist political order, a *dharmarajya*. Buddhism is very much like other world religions in this regard—and why should it be otherwise? Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, or Sikhism all have a wealth of narrative traditions, and moral and philosophical literature, that may be used to legitimize violence and to demonize enemies of the state.

Finally, all the chapters give important insights into the symbolism of the Buddhist monk in different cultural settings. The monks easily become a

symbol of the state in the Theravāda countries of Sri Lanka and Thailand because the state has for a long time been intimately linked to the Buddhist religion and the monkhood. The relationship between the armed forces and the monks often become symbiotic and the corollary is that enemies of the state can symbolically attack the state and its coercive apparatus by intimidating, threatening or killing monks. In Japan, Korea, and China the monks have had different roles, but we saw how militaristic governments here too were eager to draw on the associations that Buddhist monks have with imperial history. In all Buddhist countries, monks have a special association with death. Buddhist monks follow the Buddha's example of overcoming and relativizing death. From several of our chapters it seems that militaristic governments employ Buddhist monks because they are powerful symbols of fearlessness and calm in the face of death. Thus, it is not surprising to find that monks often served as chaplains and performed key ritual roles at the services for dead soldiers.

If we are to point out directions for future research on the relations between Buddhism, nationalism, and militarism, we must reiterate what has been stated, explicitly or implicitly, in most of our chapters. We do not really need academic debates about whether Buddhism is "really" pacifist or violent. This question cannot be answered in any meaningful sense, in our opinion. What we would like to see is more research about the details of how Buddhist organizations and Buddhist individuals engage in actual situations of armed conflict and how Buddhist narrative and doctrine are used, or not used, in order to defend or reject the use of violence.

# Contributors

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**Xue Yu** is professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is the author of *Buddhism, War and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle against Japanese Aggressions, 1937–1945* (Routledge, 2005); *Humanistic Buddhism: Thus Said and Practiced by Master Xing Yun* (in Chinese) (Chung Hwa Book, 2011); *Buddhism, Violence, and Nationalism—Chinese Buddhism during Anti-Japanese War* (In Chinese) (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2011). Currently, his research focuses on Buddhism in Socialist China, and comparative studies between humanistic Buddhism and Engaged Buddhism.

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